



THE INDEPENDENT

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WEATHER: Warm (R 45p) 40p

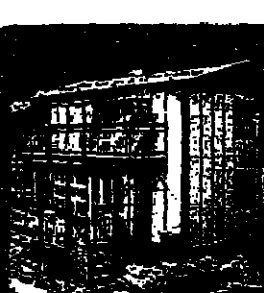
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Mir, a disaster movie in the making

Phil Reeves
Moscow
and Charles Arthur
Science Editor

The three astronauts on board the holded Mir space station were ready to abandon ship last night as they struggled to restore power to its gyroscopes, to try to prevent it from spinning out of control and crashing to Earth.

However, Russian mission control denied media suggestions that the astronauts might have to blast off at 11am BST today if they cannot get power. They insisted that there is enough bottled oxygen for five more days, and that the temperature will remain high enough to be tolerable for another two.

If Mir is abandoned, and falls out of orbit, the results could be catastrophic. One expert predicted that large chunks of the station could survive the re-entry into the atmosphere, and come crashing to the ground.

Mir's crew, including British-born Michael Foale, were forced yesterday morning to retreat by flashlight into the Soyuz escape capsule after one of them - Russian mission control would not say which - accidentally pulled out a data cable to one of the main computers.

That led to almost complete power loss, leaving the crew in darkness, without oxygen generators and unable to

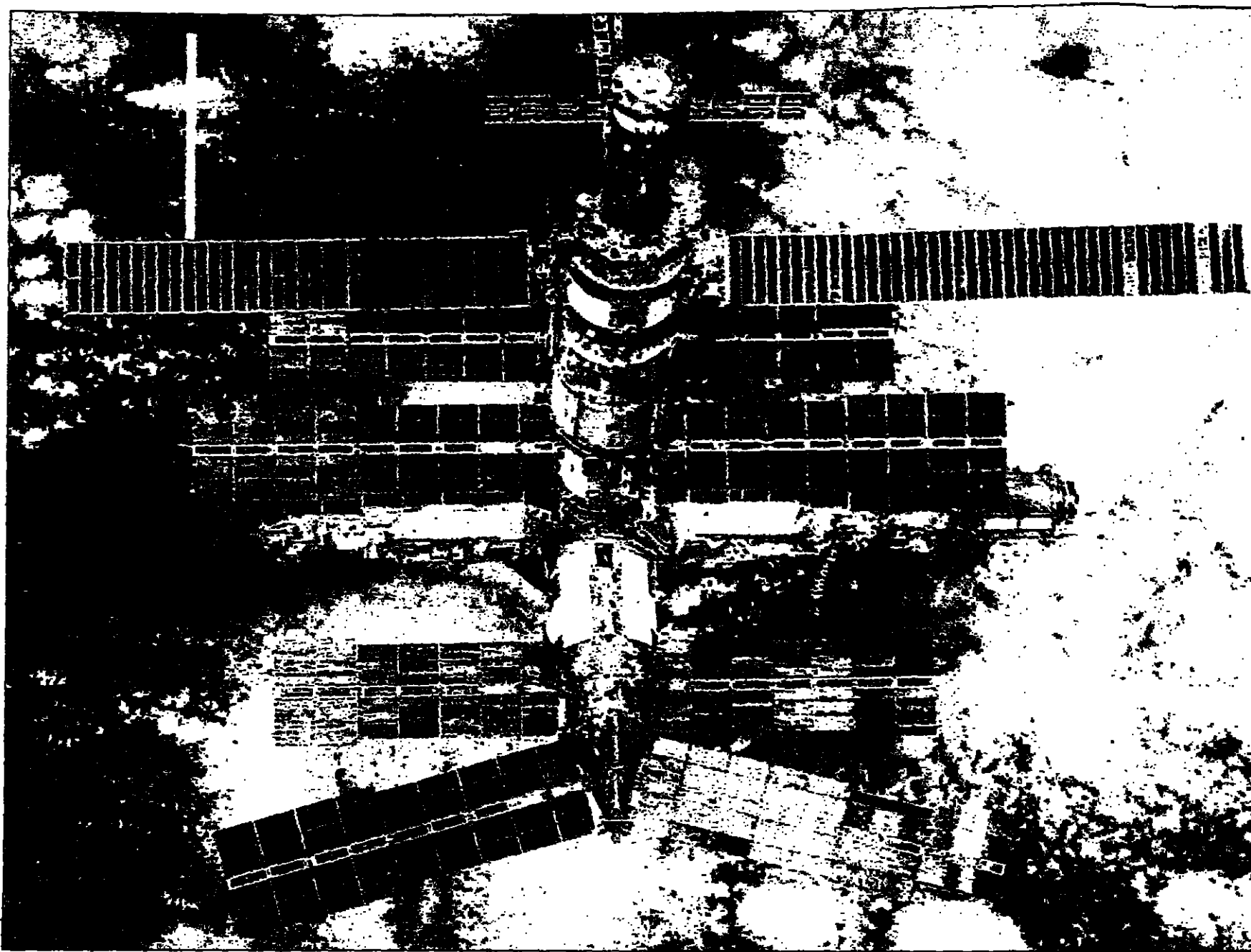
stop the 70-tonne spacecraft spinning chaotically so that its solar panels could not gather power from the Sun.

The crew is already increasingly exhausted, the result of three weeks living in a spacecraft which has lost more than a third of its power, ever since a mistake while practising docking manoeuvres caused a crash on 25 June that holed one of the six modules.

As the crisis broke, the tension among Russian ground controllers, who have been battling with a new problem every other day, was visible. One was heard barking instructions to the commander into a microphone: "Shut it down! Shut it down!"

The cosmonauts did so, plunging Mir into darkness for half of its 90-minute orbits - the period when it is out of view of the Sun. "This is a kindergarten," fumed Vladimir Solovoy, the Russian Mission Control director, after ending one radio conversation with Mir's crew. Earlier he was heard demanding: "Have you switched everything off? Switch everything off on the left side!"

By yesterday evening, officials were calmer and more confident. Mr Solovoy said Mir's orientation towards the Sun would be restored this morning and the gyroscopes system, which keeps the station in the best position to accumulate energy, would be restored tomorrow. "We are not plan-



Mission impossible? The Mir station orbiting the Earth before yesterday's critical power loss when an astronaut pulled the wrong plug

Photograph: AFP

ning to return the crew, we are planning to continue the flight," he said.

But the crisis, the latest in a catalogue of blunders and breakdowns, had made its impact. New question marks now hang over the future of Mir, a station that was designed to last for five years but has now operated for 11 - not least because Russia is desperate for the US dollars that it receives for working alongside Nasa.

The American astronaut, Jerry Linenger, who recently returned from a tour on Mir, once told an interviewer there are two words that

a cosmonaut dreads: fire and decomposition. In the last few months, Mir has had both.

In February, there was a serious fire on board in which one of the escape routes was blocked by molten metal. And on 25 June, the Spektr scientific module - where Mr Foale had his living quarters and laboratory - had to be hastily sealed off after a cargo drone bumped into it, punching a hole in a wall and causing the air to rush out. In the ensuing scramble, power cables running from solar arrays in the module were disconnected, causing

Mir to lose almost half its power. Matters grew still worse this week. As plans were being drawn up for a sortie into the dark, cramped Spektr to find and reconnect the cables, Mir's commander, Vasily Tsibilyev, began to complain of an irregular heart beat. This was not the first sign that tension was beginning to take its toll: officials at his Mission Control revealed he had been repeatedly complaining about overwork and tiredness.

A committee of specialists in Moscow ruled that he had arrhythmia and could not participate in the space walk. While he was prescribed sedatives and rest, attention switched to whether Mr Foale, a 40-year-old astrophysicist born in Lincolnshire, would take his place. Nasa yesterday said he could train for the mission, although it has yet to give him clearance. It is planned for 24-25 July.

While both Nasa and Moscow wonder what to do next, their critics are mustering. Professor Andre Balogh, an expert in space technology at Imperial College, London, yesterday declared that the Mir astronauts should abandon ship. "I

think they are in serious danger... If I was the mission controller I would give the order to evacuate."

"What is happening now is the culmination of two or three weeks' of problems. The impression I get is that it is very serious. It is like a disaster movie, but in real life... it will almost certainly go out of control if it is abandoned."

"It's big enough, there are pieces that will survive re-entry, the equivalent of two or three Skylabs [The US space station which crashed into Australia in 1980]."

Catalogue of errors, page 14

Internet grinds to a costly halt

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

The information superhighway turned into the information bridge yesterday, as the after-effects of a hacking incident last week caused the network in the United States to slow almost to a crawl.

The incident was the worst crash to affect the network since 1988, but affected far more people because of the Internet's growth since then.

Millions of Americans found that, as far as the computers which operate the network were concerned, they had ceased to exist. And although the problem had begun to be cleared up by midday yesterday, the repercussions may be lasting.

Yesterday's slowdown involved the essential "root servers" which automatically look up millions of Internet addresses every day and convert them into machine code. Anyone trying to access a machine whose Internet address ended in ".com" - the default for any American company - or ".net" - the default for companies offering Internet access - found their browsers and e-mail stalled.

Search engines, used to look for data amidst the gigantic World Wide Web, were particularly affected. Without being able to use them to search for data, much of the information on the Internet became as useless as a jumbled dictionary.

Blame at first fell on Eugene Kashpurreff, the operator of an

Internet company called Alternic, based in Bremerton, Washington state. Last week he altered the software on the root servers belonging to Network Solutions, a privately held company based in Boston, which allocates commercial Internet names (such as ".abc.com"). When users tried to access Network Solutions' systems, they would be directed to Alternic's page.

But though Network Solutions said yesterday that it had solved that problem, British Internet companies said that in doing so, the company may have led to yesterday's slowdown. "I think that in rebooting their systems they screwed up," said Justin Kenney, technical director of Cerbernet, a

UK Internet service provider.

The "root servers" are essential to the Internet. They perform the same process as a directory enquiries service, but are far more essential because there are far too many machines on the Internet for any single machine to be able to list them all.

Instead, when a user enters the name of a Web site - such as "independent.co.uk" - another computer analyses the name, starting at the back. The root server would identify that address as being in the UK, and belonging to a company. It would then direct the enquiry to a "name server" dealing with UK companies.

But yesterday it was suggested that Network Solutions

had created a bug in its own systems so that seven of its eight root servers were flawed. Only two other root servers, both belonging to the US military, were still working yesterday afternoon.

Mr Kashpurreff and his company, Alternic, could not be contacted yesterday: the phone had been cut off. He, however, has been a long-standing advocate of an expansion of the Internet's naming scheme so that ".com" could be replaced by a virtual infinity of names such as ".newspapers", ".sport" and so on. The US recently forced through such a move, expanding the number of possible "domains", against the wishes of European companies. It may now decide that it was premature.

Blair's campaign

A secret campaign to soften up public opinion over the relationship between Princess Charles and his mistress Camilla Parker Bowles is gaining momentum and could lead to a semi-public appearance by the couple in September. Page 3

Murder freezer style

A middle-aged California woman was to appear in court yesterday charged with killing her sister, storing the dismembered body in a freezer, and successfully impersonating the older woman for at least two weeks. Page 17

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Nineties fathers grow more caring

Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

The popular image of absent fathers abandoning their children is contradicted by a new report which says nearly three-quarters remain in contact, and half see their offspring at least once a week.

The report, from the Family Policy Studies Centre, notes that modern fathers are increasingly taking the emotional side of child-rearing as seriously as the economic responsibility.

It found that a typical father in the 1990s tended to be in his 30s before he had children, lived with his biological children and was married. He was still more likely to be the main breadwinner but was spending more time on caring for his children.

In fact, both fathers and

mothers spend more time caring for their children than 30 years ago. While mothers still spent more time with their children, the time spent by fathers increased fourfold between 1961-1995.

According to the National Child Development Survey, 45 per cent of mothers and 50 per cent of fathers said childcare was shared equally. When both partners worked full time, nearly seven out of 10 mothers and fathers said care was shared equally.

Children and fathers watched TV together, as well as indulging in play and sports, as well as "doing nothing".

Despite that, fathers remained the sole or main breadwinner in the vast majority of families, and the 45-hour average full-time week worked by British men is the longest in Europe.

Children and fathers watched TV together as well as indulging in play and sports

Indeed, fathers of children under 11 spend even longer at work - an average of 48 hours a week, and working unsocial hours - evenings, nights and weekends - has become commonplace for many dads.

In line with changing patterns of fertility amongst women, men are also waiting longer before they become fathers. Nearly six out of 10 men in their late 20s are still childless, and nearly one in three men in their late

30s have never fathered a child. More than 80 per cent of fathers live with their biological children and seven out of 10 are doing so within their first family.

And while it has been feared that family breakdown leads to many children losing contact with the absent parent - usually the father - the report says that while one in six fathers lived apart from some or all of their children, seven in 10 had contact and about half saw their children every week.

Some fathers said that they spent more time with their children after the break-up, said Cerdwen Roberts, director of the Family Policy Studies Centre: "Fathers put in more time at considerable expense to themselves, both emotional and financial. Sometimes there was more fathering after divorce, because after divorce they spent more time with the child on their own."

The report's author, Louise Burghes, said: "This report starts to fill some glaring gaps in knowledge and understanding - for example, we did not know until now just how many men were fathers and at what ages they had children."

"Even so, there is more to be learned to remedy the marginalisation of fatherhood in policy making and bring greater coherence to policies affecting families."

Ms Roberts added: "The debate about fatherhood and fathering must not be confined to politicians, journalists and women. It is time for more men to speak up about the sort of fathers they would like to be and what needs to be changed."

■ *Fathers and Fatherhood in Britain* is published by the Family Policy Studies Centre, 231 Baker Street, London NW1 6XE, £11.45 (inc P&P).



MARS



BARS

FOOTBALL LEAGUE, MIRV	4 July
VEUVE CLICQUOT GOLD CUP FINAL, GERMANY, PARIS	20 July
CORRUS WEEK	2-9 August
NEW CHAMPIONSHIP, TONY MATHIAS, MONTREAL, TRINITY BONGUE	7-11 August
EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL, A. FLETCHER	10-30 August
ROYAL, NAY, WAT, TROUS, LONAN	6 September
BRANDON, JONES, TRAVIS, NEWBERRY	11-14 September
LAST NIGHT OF THE PROMS	15 September
BATHING MYSTERY, GOLF	18-21 September
LA FANTASIE, U.S. QUARTET, SINGAPORE, GALEY, MITHUN	1 October

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CHAMPAGNE OF THE SEASON

significant shorts

Man arrested after tip-off on Russell killings

A man was being questioned by police last night in connection with the killing of Lin and Megan Russell, following a tip-off from a member of the public.

Police arrested the man, in his thirties and from the Medway area of Kent, yesterday morning and are questioning him at a secret location. It is understood that the man was not a previous police suspect and that he was arrested after a tip-off which followed widespread publicity at the anniversary of the double killing. Lin, 45, and her daughter Megan, six, were bludgeoned to death as they walked along a bridleway near their home at Chilenden, near Canterbury, on 9 July last year. Megan's sister Josie, now 10, was left for dead after the hammer attack but has recovered, recently regaining her powers of speech.

A DNA sample from the new suspect, he is only the second man to be arrested, is almost certain to be compared with a genetic profile obtained from a hair found at the murder scene. More than 700 people contacted the Kent incident room following a reconstruction of the murders and fresh appeals by police.

Jason Bennett

Dates set for devolution polls

The battle for the political futures of Scotland and Wales was joined yesterday with the announcement of the dates for the devolution referendums.

The Scottish vote will be held on 11 September – the 700th anniversary of William Wallace's victory over the English at Stirling Bridge. The Welsh referendum will be a week later on 18 September.

Michael Ancram, the Tory Constitutional spokesman, immediately criticised the choice of dates. "What has taken the Labour Party 18 years to work out, they are expecting the Scottish people to work out in under two months," he said. The Government suffered an unexpected defeat in the Lords two weeks ago when peers voted to hold the referendums on the same day. But that defeat is expected to be overturned when the Bill comes back to the Commons.

Sting hits high note with £20m deal



Sting, the singer, yesterday signed a £20m publishing deal, thought to be one of the biggest contracts involving a British pop artist. The former Police vocalist, now a solo artist, signed up to EMI Music Publishing for his entire back catalogue and all current and future work around the world. It is the first time the star, whose 1983 hit song "Every Breath You Take" forms the basis of the recent number one single by Puff Daddy, has signed a worldwide deal.

Wreck gives up its secrets

Fourteen historic cannon have been recovered from a wreck by treasure hunters hoping to raise gold bullion worth up to £50m, it emerged yesterday. Three of the two-ton weapons have so far been raised from the sea on to a diving rig, and the salvors believe there could be up to 50 of the weapons on the wreck of the two-masted, square-rigged Royal Mail packet ship *Hanover*, which sank in a storm in 1763 near Perranporth, Cornwall, en route from Portugal to Falmouth. The ship was believed to be carrying gold coins then worth £60,000. Colin Martin, 35, who conducted a 10-year hunt for the wreck, is leading the salvage team.

Tragedy of the railway children

The number of children killed trespassing on the railways is set to soar this year, it was disclosed yesterday. In 1996, there were 19 railway deaths involving children under the age of 16. The toll for the first half of this year alone stands at 16. Railtrack, which spends £8m each year on fencing the railway, is warning millions of schoolchildren not to use the tracks as a playground during the summer holidays. Warning letters have gone out to thousands of schools and leaflets are being distributed. Aidan Nelson, lineside safety director at Railtrack, said the chances of a train stopping in time to avoid hitting a youngster on the tracks were "virtually nil".

Writer's murderer jailed for life

A robber who targeted and murdered a celebrated travel writer because he was gay was jailed for life at the Old Bailey yesterday. Robert Tewdwr Moss, 34, was found bound and gagged in his flat, in Paddington, central London, which had been ransacked. Two socks were stuffed in the author's mouth and he was left to die from suffocation. A word processor containing the final revision of his book, *Cleopatra's Wedding Present: travels in Syria*, was stolen, along with cash and other items. Abdul Aziz, 21, a student from Paddington, had denied murder. After the jury's verdict, Judge Michael Combe told him: "You are guilty of a horrific murder of a defenceless man. He was abused with great brutality."

Passports set to go digital

The latest digital printing techniques are to be employed in an effort to make the British passport forgery-proof, it was announced yesterday. From the end of next year, all new passports will carry a digitalised image of the holder's face and signature.

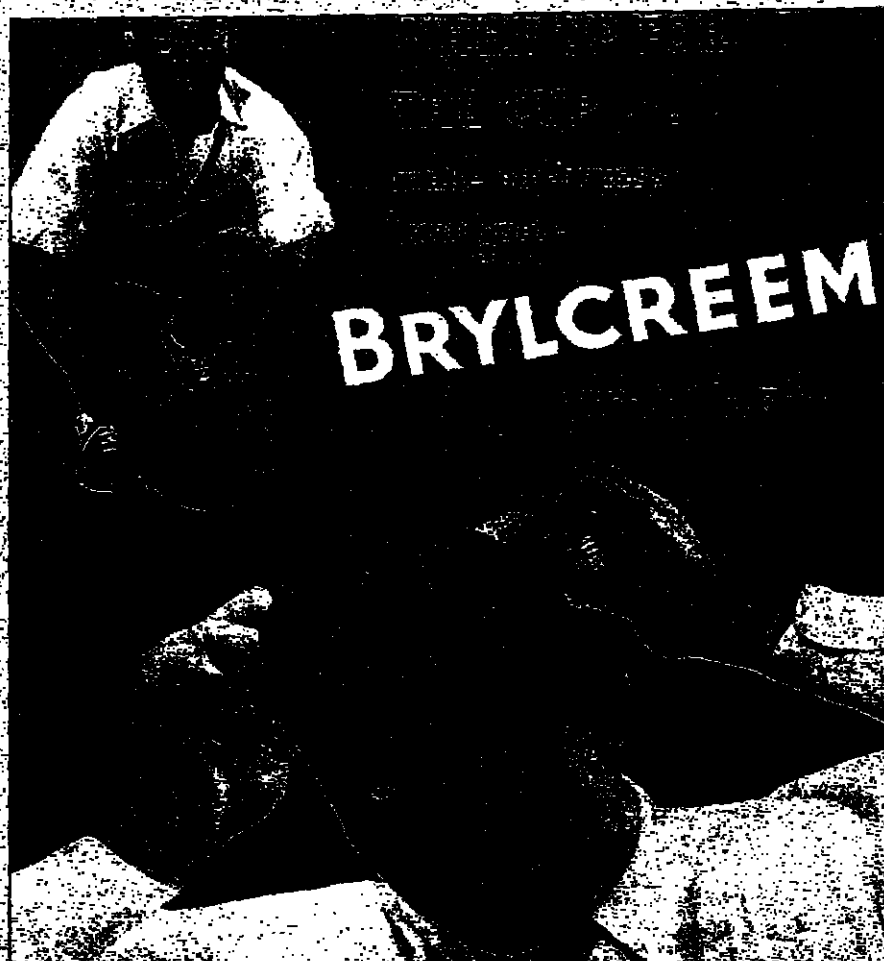
Announcing the decision, Mike O'Brien, the Home Office minister, said it would improve passport security. "The threat to the security of the passport... is growing," he said. The work has been contracted out to two private companies. Siemens Business Services will collect and transmit the electronic data for the passports while the privatised Stationery Office will print them. Mr O'Brien said the contracts did not mean the Passport Agency was being privatised.

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

Austria	£5.00	Norway	£5.00
Belgium	£5.00	Italy	£4.50
Canada	£5.00	Norway	£5.00
Cyprus	£5.00	Norway	£5.00
Denmark	£5.00	Norway	£5.00
France	£5.00	Norway	£5.00
Germany	£5.00	Norway	£5.00
Greece	£5.00	Norway	£5.00
Spain	£5.00	Norway	£5.00
Sweden	£5.00	Norway	£5.00
Switzerland	£5.00	Norway	£5.00
USA	£5.00	Norway	£5.00

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING
Recycled paper made up 43.6% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1996

people



Brylcreem's new boy

The Brylcreem boy is back, but this time he's a Spice Girl and wears "wet look gel" rather than grease you could use to lubricate a bus axle. After years of trying to ditch its traditional image and reputation itself as a modern "grooming aid", Brylcreem has returned to its roots and named David Beckham (right), the Manchester United and England footballer, as their "Daddy Compton's slicked-back man" (above). Beckham's hair is thought to be the best of the World Cup finals. Paul McCann



BBC art expert cheated out of £200,000 by his best friend

A fine arts expert from BBC TV's *Antiques Roadshow* was yesterday awarded more than £200,000 in unpaid commission over the sale of an oil painting by Constable, cheated from him by his best friend of 20 years.

Judge Prosser said Peter Nahum had suffered the "bizarre lying and devious actions" of dealer Alan Hobart, during the £5.7m sale of *View on the Stour* by Royal Holloway and Bedford New College in 1993.

The judge said the reason Mr Nahum was never paid his commission by Royal Holloway, part of the University of London, was because of a "veneer of deceit" by Mr Hobart, who represented the eventual buyer of the painting, Sir Graham Kirkham.

Mr Nahum had an oral agreement with the college to find buyers for three paintings which were to be sold to raise money for restoration work. The first, a Turner was sold independently for £11m. Mr Nahum then introduced Sir Graham to the college as a potential buyer of a Gainsborough, *Peasants Going to Market*, which

was sold for £2.5m and was then put in the collection of the college.

Even though Mr Hobart had repeatedly told Mr Nahum that his client was not interested in it, Sir Graham went on to buy the Constable. Judge Prosser said Mr Hobart had told the college this was "a completely separate deal", so there was no need to use Mr Nahum.

When Mr Nahum eventually discovered the buyer's identity, he invoiced the college for £196,812 commission, which it refused to pay, saying he had had nothing to do with the sale.

Mr Hobart had explained Sir Graham's change of mind by saying that he had seen the Constable again at the Tate Gallery and because the light was better, had decided to buy it.

But Judge Prosser said he "had no hesitation" in believing Mr Nahum's version of events. "I had a strong feeling throughout that Mr Nahum was an honest man, a straight-dealing and honourable man. I would not rely on Mr Hobart's word for anything in this case," Judge Prosser said.

Ulster grieves for teenager shot as she slept

The funeral this morning of Bernadette Martin (right), the 18-year-old Catholic woman shot dead in bed, will re-awaken the widespread feeling of revulsion across Northern Ireland that greeted her murder.

Even by the recent grim standards of the Province, the cold-blooded shooting of the teenager as she lay sleeping at the home of her Protestant boyfriend has shocked many nationalists and unionists alike.

Although the Loyalist Volunteer Force was quick to deny responsibility for Tuesday's killing, police are almost certain it was a sectarian attack, possibly motivated by sheer hatred of a Catholic young woman with a Protestant boyfriend.

If the LVF's denial is to be taken at face value, it could mean the shooting was carried out by a "freelance" loyalist or group of loyalists.

Two men, described as local, arrested in connection with the murder were still being questioned by police yesterday.

Today's service will be held at St Anthony's Catholic church in Bernadette's home town of Craigavon, Co Armagh, where she lived on one of the mixed es-



tates in the area. A few miles away is the staunchly loyalist village of Aghalee, where the teenager had been staying with the family of her boyfriend, Gordon Green.

The young couple had been up late with Gordon's sister, Wendy, and the three had fallen asleep fully clothed in an upstairs bedroom.

As Bernadette and her boyfriend slept in each other's arms, a gunman entered the house through an unlocked back door, crept up the stairs and shot her in the head four times. She died in hospital 12 hours later.

Bernadette and 19-year-old Gordon had been together for nearly a year, after meeting at the food processing company where they both worked in nearby Lurgan. Michael Streeter

Forbes splashes out on Churchill

The US publishing magnate Steve Forbes has splashed out on himself and his staff for his birthday.

The multi-millionaire – 50 today – has given his 1,000 staff the day off, and \$50 each to spend.

And for himself? He paid \$134,500 at auction yesterday for four letters written by Sir Winston Churchill to his younger brother Jack.

The letters, auctioned by Sotheby's in London, reveal Churchill's fondness for his brother, whom he regarded as his dearest relation. They begin three weeks after the start of the First World War in 1914.

They also expose Churchill's misplaced convictions about the success of the disastrous Dardanelles campaign, which resulted in the death of 28,200 British, Australian and New Zealand soldiers.

An early candidate in last year's US presidential elections, Forbes has a fortune of \$500m and is an avid collector of Churchill memorabilia.

Two working manuscripts for "begging letters" written by Emma, Lady Hamilton, to the Prince Regent and the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, asking for money in return for her services to the nation, sold for £45,500 at Sotheby's yesterday. Alexandra Williams

briefing

WHITEHALL

Tories dominate quangos by margin of six to one

Six times more Conservatives than Labour supporters were put in charge of quangos last year, a report revealed yesterday.

Sir Leonard Peach, the independent Commissioner for Public Standards, said as he launched his annual report that he expected the balance to swing in Labour's favour now the party was in government. He also said he planned to warn ministers against allowing their political advisers to sit on appointments panels for public bodies.

This year's report, the second published by Sir Leonard, is the first to analyse the number of political appointments made to quangos.

Although only 17 per cent of chairmen and 9 per cent of board members had been political candidates or had made public speeches in support of a particular party, most of those who had done so were Tories.

Of 216 chairmen and women appointed or reappointed last year to one of 8,000 public bodies between July 1996 and March 1997, 37 were politically active. Of those, 30 were Tories, five were Labour, one was Liberal Democrat and one Plaid Cymru. None were identified as being ministerial nominations.

Only one in five of the chairmen's posts went to women, and none went to people from ethnic minorities. Fran Abrams



ARCHAEOLOGY

Stone coffin holds Roman remains

A stone coffin thought to contain the remains of a high-ranking Roman official has been unearthed on the site of a housing development in the West Country.

Archaeologists discovered the sarcophagus at Mangotsfield, near Bristol, while examining a former school playing field before the bulldozers moved in. The find is regarded as one of the most important Roman discoveries in the region.

Experts from the Avon Archaeological Unit believe the skeleton, which has been nicknamed Titus, belongs to an important Roman official who was able to afford a lavish burial. They hope the find could lead them to the site of a nearby Roman villa.

The skeleton is believed to date to between 200 and 400AD, close to the fall of the Roman Empire.

It has been taken to the Bristol Industrial Museum where bone expert Dr Geraldine Barber will carry out tests, which could include DNA profiling.

TRANSPORT

Technology puts brakes on speeders

Speeding motorists could be slowed down by on-board computers which would automatically override the driver and apply the brakes. Trials could begin next year on the M4 motorway between London and South Wales.

Roadside beacons would send radio signals to the computers of passing cars, telling them the speed limit. If the driver is speeding, the computer would apply the brakes gently but firmly. The motorist would also find that if he or she tried to exceed the speed limit, the accelerator would refuse to work.

Tests on drivers in simulators suggest that the loss of control does not anger them, according to the Institute for Transport Studies at the University of Leeds, which carried out the trials.

Another option is for each car to carry a digital map containing information on speed limits. Data on traffic jams, poor weather conditions and even crowding from people leaving a football match could be transmitted to each car and the speed limit reduced to suit the circumstances. Alison Goddard

MONEY

Plastic taking over from paper

Paying with plastic has become so popular that spending on credit and debit cards is likely to exceed £100bn this year. Only 10 years after they were first launched, payment by debit cards accounts for almost a fifth of retail spending.

Figures from the Credit Card Research Group showed that card spending amounted to £46bn in the first half of the year and is growing at an annual rate of 19 per cent. "These figures show credit and debit cards taking an ever larger slice," said spokesman Peter Welch.

The acceptance of debit cards is now spreading particularly fast in repair shops, opticians and amongst tradespeople such as electricians and plumbers. In other areas their acceptance has started to reach a plateau. Diane Coyle

EDUCATION

Extent of student debt revealed

A third of undergraduates are living in permanent debt, according to a researched published as it emerged that students are set to face £3,000 bills for tuition fees.

As ministerial sources indicated the Government will accept a recommendation to introduce tuition charges of around £1,000 a year, the new findings suggest that already only around a quarter of students have no experience of debt.

Of those whose bank accounts never shifted out of the red, the majority felt they were not adequately prepared for the financial demands of university life, the study found.

Another third of undergraduates had at least some experience of debt while at university.

The survey, by the NatWest Bank, found that students in debt often could not identify what had pushed them into the red, and many did not realise the full extent of their debt until after graduation. The tuition fees would add to average overdrafts of between £3,000 and £5,000 already experienced by students on leaving university. Lucy Ward

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Secret strategy for Camilla to go public

Steve Boggan and Michael Streeter

A secret campaign to soften up public opinion over the relationship between Princess Charles and his mistress Camilla Parker Bowles is gaining momentum and could lead to a semi-public appearance by the couple in September.

paving the way for what many see as their inevitable marriage.

It is thought that the couple may be planning to "go public" at a fund-raising event organised by Mrs Parker Bowles and her sister, Annabel Elliot, for the National Osteoporosis Society, in an antiques warehouse in Dorset.

An example of the campaign was seen yesterday with a story in the *Daily Mail* - more noted for its pro-Princess Diana

stance - in which it was claimed the Prime Minister's Private Office is preparing contingency plans on how to deal with a decision by the couple to marry.

"I understand there is a group of well-meaning people close to the Prince... who may be testing the water," said Harold Brooks-Baker, publisher of *Burke's Peerage*. "While the Prince knew nothing of this, he did nothing to reprimand those involved."

The enthusiasm of the unofficial lobbying group, known in some circles as the Camilla Group, is fuelled by what they see as an unfair and at times vicious campaign aimed at Mrs Parker Bowles' role in the break-up of the Prince of Wales's marriage, and unfair comparisons between her appearance and that of Diana.

However, senior courtiers and civil servants are thought to be counselling caution about raising the couple's public profile too quickly. For both groups the nightmare scenario is for the Prince and Mrs Parker Bowles to appear in public and be booed or ridiculed.

The charity function at Gillingham, Dorset, on 13 September, is thought to offer a suitable half-way house event, where the guests are coming by invitation only into a controlled environment. The Osteoporosis Society said it could make no

comment on who was, or who was not attending. Nicholas Soames, the former Tory minister, is understood to be a member of the Camilla group, and a source said that other leading lights include financier Bill Legge-Bourke, father of Tiggy, the Wales's former nanny, and Charles Palmer-Jones, whose wife, Patti, was seriously injured in the avalanche that nearly took the Prince's life in a skiing accident

at Klosters in 1988. "These are close friends - some going back three generations - who always felt that Charles's marriage to Diana was a mis-match," said the source. "Several months ago, they decided enough was enough and he deserved some happiness, so they decided to get together to see what they could do."

Former Tory ministers said last night that they were confident that the Prince of Wales would seek a marriage with Camilla. "It will have to be after a decent interval, but it is looking pretty certain," said one former minister.

Prince Charles has held a series of meetings with ministers this week, including Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, to show support through the Prince's Trust for the Government's welfare to work plans. He will meet Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, next Monday.

The future is born from a womb made of plastic

Charles Arthur Science Editor

Japanese researchers have released the first pictures of an artificial womb which has been used to bring 17-week-old goat foetuses to "birth" three weeks later.

The team at Tokyo's Juntendo University reckon that in 10 years' time, the same technology could be used to improve the survival of premature babies, and to provide an alternative womb in the case of mothers bearing multiple foetuses.

The experiments have been in progress for six years, but the scientists have only now decided to release more information.

Although some have expressed fears that it could lead to the scenario described by Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World*, where millions of children are bred and grow in sterile incubators, the team emphasised that their system cannot replace the crucial stage in which the fertilised egg grows through the embryo stage.

Rather, it could eventually help premature babies, who are frequently unable to get enough oxygen into their blood because their lungs have not developed fully. Similarly, in multiple pregnancies - such as that of Mandy Allwood, who last year lost eight foetuses - it would be possible to make space in the womb by removing some of the developing embryos.

Lord Robert Winston, one of Britain's

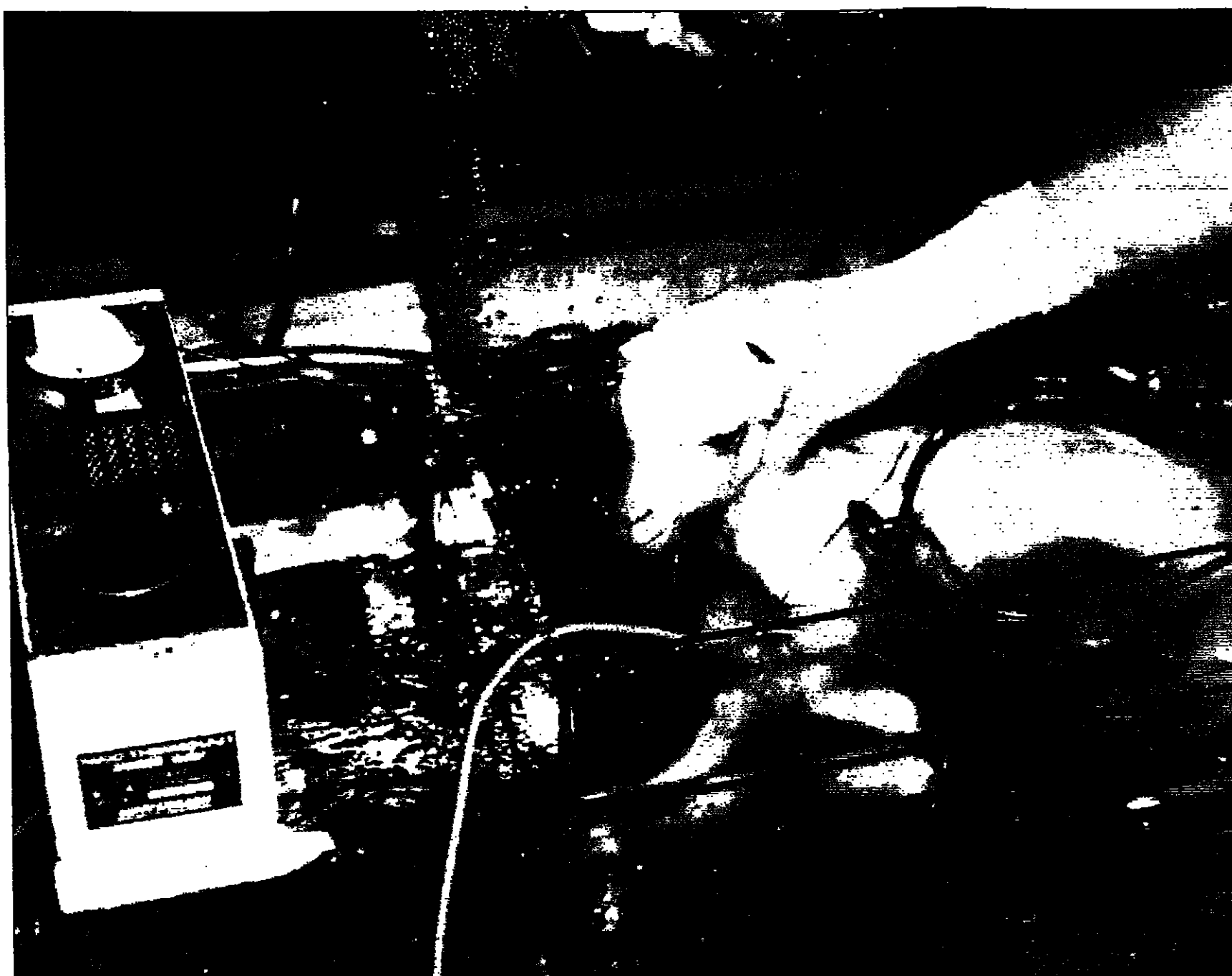
foremost fertility experts, from Hammersmith Hospital, London, said: "The current problem is that babies that are born prematurely are too immature to breathe and fend for themselves. A technique like this may well save a number of babies that would otherwise die."

The team, led by Yoshinori Kuwabara, professor of obstetrics at Juntendo University, carried out a number of trials. They removed a goat embryo from its mother 17 weeks into pregnancy and then placed it in an open-topped transparent acrylic tank, filled with liquid at blood temperature. This simulated the amniotic fluid in a real womb. The placenta was replaced by a machine which pumped oxygen and nutrients into the embryo's blood.

A number of kids have been born from the tank. The scientists announced their achievement today having kept one hand-reared goat, Kanna - meaning Flower - alive for six years.

Professor Kuwabara said: "This system should be used on behalf of the mother who cannot keep the foetus in her uterus. If I have time and money for experiments, maybe within 10 years we will have made the move from animal to humans."

The Japanese team was advised by British doctors, but the experiment could not be carried out here because it would have breached ethical guidelines.



Life-giver: A kid born from the artificial womb developed by Japanese scientists. The embryo was removed at 17 weeks and reared in the 'womb' Photograph: UTA

High-dose therapy gives cancer breakthrough

Jeremy Laurance Health Editor

Doctors have made a big advance in understanding cancer that has led to the first improvement in survival from one of the worst types of the disease for 20 years.

Researchers found that lung cancer, the commonest cause of cancer death in the Western world, which kills 40,000 people a year in Britain, grows faster than previously thought. Giving radiotherapy three times a day instead of the conventional regime of once a day, increases survival by 50 per cent.

By giving more frequent doses of radiation, the rapidly proliferating cancer cells are killed and do not have time to regenerate before the next dose.

Even a gap of 24 hours is enough to allow the lung cancer to spread. Researchers are testing the technique in other cancers to see if the same applies. Conventional radiotherapy for lung cancer involves 30 treatments given once a day from Monday to Friday over six weeks, with a total dose of 60 Gray (units of radiation).

A trial of the new technique known as Chart (Continuous hyperfractionated accelerated radiotherapy) involved giving 36 treatments three times a day for 12 days, with no breaks at weekends and a total dose of 54 Gray.

The two techniques were compared in 560 patients with non-small-cell lung cancer, the commonest kind, accounting for three-quarters of all cases of lung cancer, over five years.

The results, published in *The Lancet*, show that 29 per cent of those who had the new treatment survived two years, compared with 20 per cent of those who had the conventional treatment.

Mahesh Parmar, of the Medical Research Council's Cancer Trials Office in Cambridge, which co-ordinated the study, said the technique could have been used decades ago but no one had guessed the cancer grew so fast.

"That is what the results appear to be telling us."

A similar trial of the new technique in head and neck cancers had proved disappointing but it was now being tried in cancer of the oesophagus (gullet), where researchers are more optimistic of securing

good results. Studies are also being carried out with chemotherapy to shorten the period over which courses of treatment are given. Of 560 lung-cancer sufferers who started the trial, 444 have died. Ann Barrett, of the oncology centre at the Western Infirmary, Glasgow, and a member of the research team said: "Survival is still low. It is not good enough, but it is an improvement. This study has given people hope that it is worth going on trying new techniques even in a disease that is so resistant to treatment." Lesley Walker, of the Cancer Research Campaign, which part-funded the study, said: "This is the first major improvement in lung cancer survival offered by any form of radiotherapy in the last 20 years."

Forget novels, just write the movie

David Lister Arts News Editor

The day of the novel as draft film script has arrived, with publishers reading manuscripts as screenplays rather than as literature.

Travel agent Keri Beevis, 25, who writes horror stories in her bedroom in her spare time, has just received a £750,000 advance from a publisher for three novels - the highest advance paid in Britain for an unpublished author.

But her agent, Peter Willis, last night gave an insight into the rationale behind a particular trend of 1990s big-money advances. He said: "This is not a big advance, because we are not really talking novels here. We are talking screenplays. And in Hollywood terms this isn't big money." This was endorsed up by the man who has paid the advance, Emrys Bowen, publishing director of Huntingdon-based publishers Buckley-Bennion. "Keri writes very well for the screen," he said. "Her books are very much written in dialogue form."

Mr Bowen says he is close to sealing a deal with a Hollywood studio for £1.5m per



Keri Beevis: Horror addict

book. He is also securing a deal to publish Miss Beevis in America, while publishing her here for the first time in September.

A screenplay-friendly novel leads to film rights, which in turn spur more sales of the book. The mutual trade-off between book and film has reached its apogee in the nineties with John Grisham. All his books become films. Some 400,000 copies of a special paperback version of *The Pelican Brief* were published simply to tie in with the film release. The most celebrated British case until

this week was that of first-time novelist Nicholas Evans, given a £375,000 advance for *The Horse Whisperer*. Before the tale of a man who could talk to horses was even in the shops the film rights were sold to Robert Redford's production company, Hollywood Pictures, for £1.9m.

Sales certainly profit from the publicity of a large advance and a film tie-in.

Ruth Killick, spokeswoman for Dillons booksellers, said: "There's no question that we sit up and take notice when there is a story of a first-time novelist getting a huge advance. It helps sales and we will generally stock the book. Film tie-ins are increasingly vital for boosting sales."

But the tale of Keri Beevis is still likely to be the exception rather than the rule. Susan Blisshen, of the Publishers' Association, said yesterday: "This sort of thing is still uncommon, particularly with an unknown novelist and a small publisher. The sort of book that translates into a film is rare."

Meanwhile, Miss Beevis who was back at work at Grand UK Holidays in Norwich yesterday, was being made into a limited company by her agent.

The mood in the travel agents was remarkable, according to Mr Willis.

He said: "It's like walking into *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. They score Brownie points if they come up with the most macabre way to kill someone."

It would appear Miss Beevis, who writes under the pseudonym Keri Leigh, is not in need of advice.

One of her books has a murder carried out with a drinking straw, though she will not reveal how before publication.

A horror-story fanatic who twice failed her English GCSE, and in fact only received one pass - in art, she wrote one of her horror trilogy in six weeks on the computer in the bedroom of her parents' house where she lives, writing only at evenings and weekends.

A rather bewildered Miss Beevis yesterday claimed to be "an everyday girl who just happens to come up with these really sick and nasty things."

"My teachers at school used to despair of me."

"They could not understand why I was not writing nice stories like Jane Austen or Emily Brontë."

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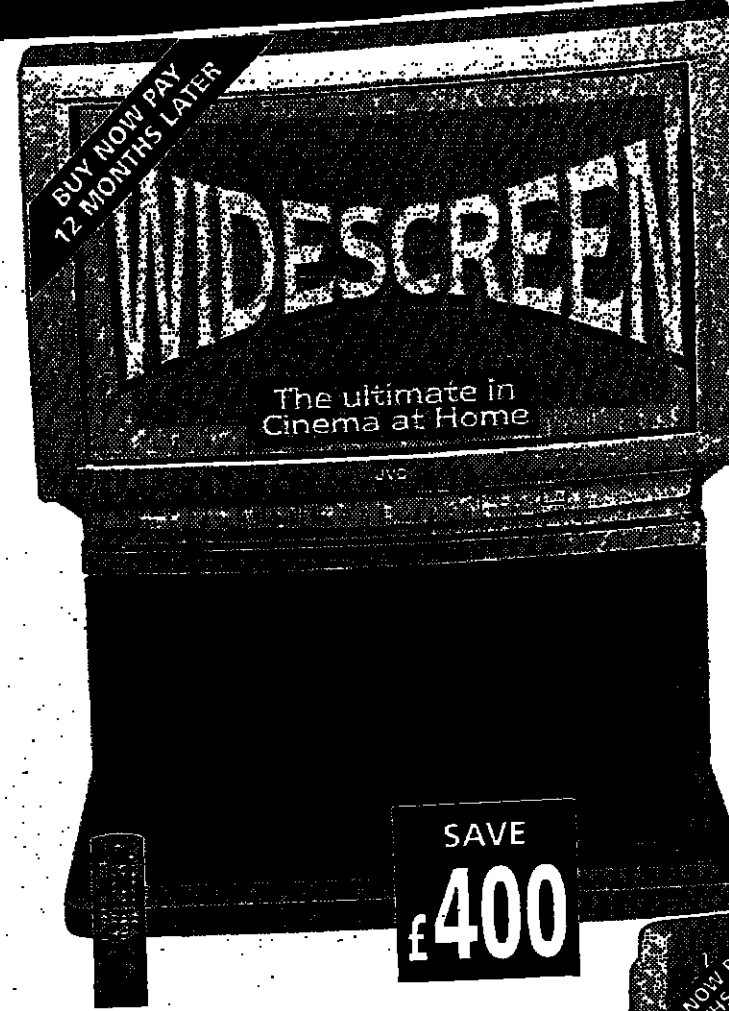
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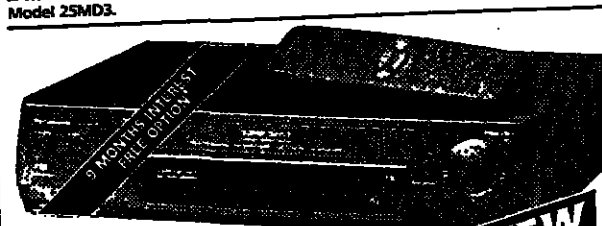
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Insurer pays cost of e-mail rumours

Patricia Wynn Davies
Legal Affairs Editor

The dangers of circulating unsubstantiated rumour via e-mail were starkly demonstrated yesterday after the Norwich Union insurance giant was forced to pay out £450,000 in libel damages and costs.

The out-of-court settlement, thought to be unprecedented, in favour of the private medical insurers Western Provident Association could have implications for companies who are careless about the kind of information transmitted on their internal e-mail systems about competitors, clients, advisers or other commercial contacts.

There has already been an out-of-court settlement in an e-mail case involving private individuals which has served to spotlight the risks of disseminating defamatory personal information, which would include some forms of office gossip, through the electronic medium.

While it is the same law of libel that applies to e-mails as to paper messages – essentially, publication of defamatory material to another person without the plaintiff having to prove he suffered damage – the ease of e-mail communications and their sheer multiplicity can significantly magnify the libel risk. Once untrue or unprovable rumours on an organisation's internal e-mail spill out to or are accessed by the outside world, the potential damages will be that much greater.

Western Provident had brought proceedings against Norwich Union Healthcare, part of the Norwich Union Life Insurance Company, after rumours began circulating in insurance circles in 1995.

David Engel, solicitor for Western Provident, told Mr Jus-

tiace Popplewell at the High Court that the claims – that the company was insolvent, being investigated by the Department of Trade and Industry and unable to write new business – were disseminated by some Norwich Union staff via its internal e-mail system. Norwich Union now accepted there was no truth in any of the allegations.

David Sherborne, counsel for Norwich Union, said it regretted and apologised for the dissemination of the rumours. The company had made every effort to ensure that such "unacceptable practices" did not occur again and had undertaken not to repeat the allegations.

Julian Stainton, WPA's chief executive, said: "People regard electronic mail as a transient medium in that the message disappears into the ether. The reality is that everything you type and send is recorded almost for all time and is available to be reassembled at a later date by the written or spoken word."

This novel libel risk is likely to give much food for thought in the business community. In an increasingly global economy, libel payouts through careless electronic communication could be payable in a number of different jurisdictions, depending on a country's laws.

Organisations might have sound reasons, for example, for issuing warnings or instructions to staff about undertaking certain types of transaction or doing business with certain organisations. But if these can be construed as libellous, the cash register will start ringing.

The moral of the tale appears to be that in the electronic age much more care will have to be taken – in businesses and homes – than in the days of the old-fashioned office memo or postman's letter.



Sporting passion: Colin Firth at Highbury, in the film version of Nick Hornby's best-selling book on the trials and tribulations of supporting Arsenal

Fever Pitch stand saved for posterity

Louise Jury

An art deco football stand at the north London home of Arsenal was saved for posterity yesterday after Tony Banks, the soccer-mad sports and heritage minister, granted it listed status.

The East Stand at Highbury stadium – a ground immortalised in Arsenal supporter Nick Hornby's book *Fever Pitch* – follows Wembley and Fulham's Craven Cottage on to the protected list of football grounds.

But many fans breathed a sigh of relief when Mr Banks, a supporter of London rivals Chelsea, decided against English Heritage's recommendation to list the West Stand too.

Doing so would have complicated Arsenal's planned expansion and, it was feared, precipitated a move from the much-loved site. Any changes to

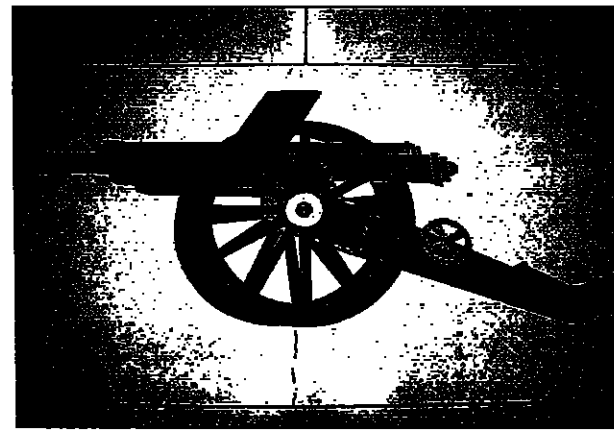
a listed building have to be agreed with the local authority to ensure that the features are preserved.

The compromise was welcomed by Simon Inglis, author of *The Football Grounds of Britain*. He said both stands would have been listed in an ideal world, but saving the East Stand was logical and sensible.

"The West Stand is the older of the two and set the tone, but the stand itself is fairly rudimentary. If its demolition is the price that Arsenal pay for remaining at Highbury then I think, reluctantly, it's a price worth paying," he said.

"Highbury is one of the finest traditional football stadiums in the world and Arsenal have done a great deal to preserve that spirit. It really is the Lords of the football world. It is an institution."

A spokeswoman for Islington Council, in whose borough the stadium lies, said the club had



Badge of distinction: The Gunners' logo adorns the stand

approached it earlier this year about possible expansion.

Listing the East Stand did not seriously affect the guidance it was drawing up on the feasibility of a planning application as the West Stand is regarded as the

crux of any expansion. If Mr Banks – whose duties include making the final decision on English Heritage's listing recommendations – had granted this listed status, it might have proved an insuperable problem for the club. But any development will still face opposition from residents whose homes might be affected. Councillors met last night to discuss a draft planning brief.

Highbury is regularly packed to its 38,200 capacity. It is understood that it would like to be able to take another 10,000. An Arsenal spokeswoman said the club had no formal plans. But she added: "You only have to look at the stand we put up at the north end to see we took great pains to fit it in with the art deco. We're proud of the way the stadium looks and are looking to enhance it."

An English Heritage spokeswoman said the two stands should be considered for listing together. But she said: "We recognise that the East Stand is the more architecturally distinguished of the two and we're really glad it has been listed..."

Court quashes teenage murder verdict

Patricia Wynn Davies

A teenager jailed for murdering a policeman when he was 100 yards away walked free yesterday after a "joint enterprise" murder conviction was overturned by the House of Lords.

Philip English, now 19, had been convicted of stabbing Sergeant Bill Forth to death in Gateshead even though he had been chased away by police, was under arrest and in handcuffs.

While the five law lords will give the reasons for the landmark ruling at a later date, it is believed the case will set new parameters for the law of "joint enterprise", which saw Derek Bentley executed in 1953 for the murder of a policeman carried out by someone else. But while Bentley – whose family's posthumous bid to clear his name is with the Criminal Cases Review Commission – cried out "let him have it" to his accomplice, Philip English was not even in sight of the crime.

The fatal stabbing was carried out by Paul Weddle, then aged 25, after Sgt Forth was called to an incident at the home of Weddle's former girlfriend. The court heard Weddle and Mr English, then a 15-year-old schoolboy, set about the sergeant with pieces of fencing. After Mr English ran off and was caught around the corner, Weddle produced a small knife and stabbed Sgt Forth to death.

Mr English said at his trial in 1994 that he did not know Weddle had a knife and had never intended that Sgt Forth should suffer serious harm. He was convicted of murder on a 10-2 majority. The prosecution argued that even if he did run off, English remained a party to the agreement to the attack and was liable for what Weddle did.

The teenager's relieved stepmother, Mandy English, said: "Thank God common sense has applied today."

But Sgt Forth's widow, Gill McEwin, said: "I feel that Bill has been let down by the British justice system."

Adrian Clarke, Mr English's solicitor, called for a clarification of the law.

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politics

John Major's snowy hair and a tabloid tosspot

Kim Sengupta

The affairs of the Conservative Party may lately have come to resemble the Palace of Varieties, but few acts could ever top Kelvin at the Carlton Club.

Kelvin MacKenzie, the legendary former editor of the *Sun*, who delivered the blue-collar vote to the Tories at successive elections, was appearing last night at the watering hole of high Toryism to tell the party "how they mismanaged media relations of the last election".

The Carlton was the venue of a *Bow Group* seminar on how William Hague can win back the right-wing press. Sharing the platform with Mr MacKenzie, managing director of Live TV, were John Sopel from the BBC, and communications chiefs from Smith Square. The right-wing ideologue Michael Gove, the biographer of Michael Portillo, was in the chair.

Times have changed. Mr MacKenzie's former organ loudly supported Blairism at the last election after Rupert Murdoch's seeming conversion to New Labour, and officials at Conservative Central Office



Gutter pride: Kelvin MacKenzie arriving at the Carlton Club in London yesterday

Photograph: Peter Macdianid

now privately acknowledge that they had been out-manoeuvred and outgunned by Labour.

Mr MacKenzie set the theme for his analysis of the problem in an article appearing in the *Spectator* today. He recounts being present at the salient moment when John Major "went completely off his trolley".

He recalls: "It was an autumn morning and I had been summoned to Number 10. In a bizarre ritual, tabloid editors are often invited to Downing Street to enjoy briefings by the Prime Minister. It normally boils down to him (or her) explaining in some detail why he is a genius and why his critics are dimwits."

Mr MacKenzie soon realised that "this day was different". He said: "Suddenly, he began to rant against the press. The standards of journalism, he opined, were in the gutter. This rather pleased me, as I had always taken some pride in being in the gutter. 'Stories were untrue or unpleasant, or both, our esteemed

leader maintained. Then he produced a page three of the *Sun* - which he had hidden under the table."

It was not that the Prime Minister found page-three topless girls offensive, Mr MacKenzie realised, but a story by the paper's political editor saying that the pressure of office was turn-

ing Mr Major's grey hair white.

"Mr Major said to me 'it's this kind of rubbish that gives the press a bad name. I'm sick of it, bloody sick of it.' He then bowed his head, pointed his finger at his hair and said: 'For God's sake, Kelvin, look at my hair: is there any white there?'"

"To my eternal shame, and despite looking at Mr Major's snowy thatch, I lied and indicated that the strain of being the *Sun*'s political guru was clearly getting to our Trevor (Ka-o of our trade, and, by the same logic, nearer 3.5 million jobs depend on the single market ...

"The idea that we could become a Hong Kong of Europe as a trading post or as a tax haven serving major trading blocs - the Tory idea of a greater Guernsey - only needs a minute's consideration to be rejected."

Having rejected the negative Tory stance, Mr Brown said that the country required constructive engagement with Europe, and the biggest challenge to be faced was that of the single currency.

The Chancellor recited the Treasury mantra, "that while nothing has been ruled out, there are formidable obstacles to the UK joining the single currency in the first wave."

Brown picks at old Tory wounds

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

Gordon Brown yesterday threw open the debate about the single European currency with a strong attack on Conservative policies of dogma and prejudice, which he ridiculed as "the Tory ideas of a greater Guernsey".

By picking at the Tory wounds over Europe, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was able to portray its leadership as anti-business - while embarrassing moderate members of the party, who would endorse much of Mr Brown's argument for an open approach to the euro.

Mr Brown said that the new line taken by William Hague, rejecting a single currency under his leadership, while calling for a referendum on the Treaty of Amsterdam, represented a new dogmatism.

"Today," he said, "The Conservative Party are repeating the Labour mistakes of 1983. Then, it was suggested by the CBI that Labour's policy of disengagement put 2.5 million jobs at risk."

"That was when 44 per cent of our exports went to EU members. Now it is 58 per cent."

"The idea that we could become a Hong Kong of Europe as a trading post or as a tax haven serving major trading blocs - the Tory idea of a greater Guernsey - only needs a minute's consideration to be rejected."

He said that "when" the time came to make a decision - the word "if" was not used - it would be reached in the British way, coolly, and the people would be consulted by referendum.

"To make the right decision for Britain," Mr Brown said, "we need an open and intelligent debate. Until now, the debate on our economic role in Europe, and especially Economic and Monetary Union, has been dominated by extreme views on either side. Dogma competing to be heard above prejudice. This is not the way to protect and forward British national interests."

But he added that British industry would be affected whether or not Britain joined the euro, and he pointed to the significant advantages of a single currency in a fully-developed market - the elimination of exchange rate risk, more transparent pricing, a reduction of transaction costs, and lower long-term interest rates, which, in turn, would promote investment, growth and jobs.

However, Mr Brown said a hard-headed assessment would be required of Britain's national economic interest.

That meant a judgement would have to be taken on the basis of certain tests: would membership improve long-term investment; what would be the impact on financial services; would economic structures be compatible with the constraints of permanent membership; and would there be sufficient, inbuilt flexibility to take any strains?

Mr Brown said his "bottom line" was whether membership would promote higher growth, stability and a lasting increase in jobs. But he added: "Our concern about the single currency has always been that Britain should only join if the economic conditions are right, not on the basis of a timetable that has been set politically."

He said that "when" the time came to make a decision - the word "if" was not used - it would be reached in the British way, coolly, and the people would be consulted by referendum.

Donald Macintyre, page 21

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Jason Bennett
Crime Correspondent

The firearms lobby reacted with fury yesterday at the disclosure that the Government was preparing to consider new restrictions on the use of rifles, shotguns and air weapons.

Shooting enthusiasts announced that they planned to hold a protest rally in London at the end of September.

As *The Independent* reported yesterday, a fresh review of the firearms laws will be launched next year. The Home Office is likely to back a minimum 18 year age-limit for shotguns and tighter licensing, the banning of most powerful rifles, and a licensing or age restriction for ownership of air guns.

The issue is expected to be reopened after the legislation on handguns has been completed in Parliament and an estimated 200,000 revolvers have been handed in and destroyed.

The British Association for Shooting and Conservation, which has more than 114,000 members, said it would "fight proposals including tighter age restrictions for young people using firearms and a licensing for air weapons".

Bill Harriman, head of firearms for the BASC, said: "These proposed restrictions are being justified by using alarmist tactics. The public should be reassured that there are already stringent controls."

"The Government should look at the real, but much more difficult, problem of the criminal use of firearms."

He argued that it was unnecessary to set an age limit on shotgun use - at present there is no age restriction and children as young as 12 use guns - because strict safety checks are already in place. An estimated 1,760 shotgun certificates have been issued to people aged under 17, he added.

"It is in the interest of safety that a young person should be properly taught at a relatively early age," he said.

On the question of restricting rifle use, he argued that it

would harm the management of the countryside.

Mike Yardley, spokesman for the Sportsman's Association, which has 40,000 members, said yesterday that his organisation will be organising a protest meeting in London. He said:

"We have decided this in the past few days - it appears there's political capital to be made out of further attacks against shooting sports. We want to show our opposition to this."

Since the Dunblane massacre, there has been raised concern about the availability of all firearms and their control.

There are 1.4 million licensed shotguns held in England and Wales, 200,000 licensed rifles and an estimated three million air weapons.

In 1995, there were a record 7,549 offences caused with air guns, in which about a fifth resulted in injury. Most of the other cases involved vandalism. There were 943 crimes involving shotguns in 1995, in which 12 per cent caused injury, and 50 offences involving rifles.



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Pensions review raises spectre of cuts

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

An official review of pensions provision was set up yesterday by Harriet Harman, Secretary of State for Social Security, to explore the problems that persist despite annual public-private contributions worth £50bn.

The review would cover "all aspects of the basic pension and its value and second pensions, including the State Earnings Related Pension [SERPS]; to build a sustainable consensus for the long-term future of pensions; and to publish the Government's proposals for further consultation in the first part of 1998."

With the State pensions bill now at £33.5bn, excluding benefits like income support, there is a natural suspicion that the unspoken agenda is a search for savings - with more of the burden to be carried by individuals.

One of the challenges set by Ms Harman included the need for agreement on "where the responsibility for funding pensions should lie, and to establish the right balance between the public and private sectors."

In parallel work, the Government is developing proposals on its manifesto plans for the retention of SERPS, and for the establishment of "a new framework of good-value second pensions schemes - 'stakeholder pensions' - to meet the needs of those on low or modest incomes or with changing patterns of employment, and how new partnerships between the pensions industry, employers and employees might be developed."

Excessive charges and the poor value of existing personal pensions provision for the low-paid - especially women - has been a long-standing crusade, in opposition, of John Denham, the new pensions minister.

But if a successful "stakeholder pension" can be established it could provide a competitive incentive for existing pension providers to improve their service.

Ms Harman said yesterday: "The failure over the last two decades to develop an adequate pensions strategy has resulted in widening inequalities among pensioners. Too many of our older citizens do not enjoy security in retirement."

Peter Lilley, the shadow Chancellor, dismissed the exercise, saying: "It's really an attempt to obscure the fact that they've just imposed a £5bn tax on pension funds, and a government which does that is clearly not serious about encouraging people to save and invest for the future."

Secret talks plot changes for Commons

Anthony Bevins
and Colin Brown

A protest about the secrecy surrounding a Government project to "modernise" the workings of the House of Commons was made yesterday, raising fears that ministers are seeking to take over more control.

Richard Shepherd, the Conservative MP for Aldridge-Brownhills, complained to the Leader of the House, Ann Taylor, about secret meetings of the cross-party modernisation committee over recent weeks.

Mrs Taylor said the committee, which she chairs, was meeting in secret "because that is what the House decided". She said it was still deliberating, but it is understood its draft report is being finalised and expected to be published before the recess of Parliament in a fortnight.

The report will herald a wide range of far-reaching changes to the way the Commons operates, which could be approved for the next session of Parliament.

The main change is likely to be the timetabling of all Government bills, ending the use of filibustering as a tactic to try to delay Government legislation.

Supporters argue it will mean MPs will have more orderly de-

bates, with an end to all-night sessions. Tory MPs are ready to agree to timetabling, but were said to be digging in their heels over a demand that the committee stage of all constitutional Bills will be taken on the floor of the Commons.

One senior Tory source said: "It's non-negotiable." But MPs privately said they expected the report to go ahead next week, for a debate and vote in the autumn.

There were also claims that the Labour leadership could use a change of voting system for European elections to weed out troublesome left wing Labour MEPs.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, announced proportional representation would be introduced for the European elections in 1999 by the regional list system, allowing the party more control over which candidates go forward to the European Parliament. A Bill will be introduced later this session.

The introduction of PR would mean minor parties could expect to win seats if they get more than about 10 per cent of the votes. Ministers said the Green Party would have secured a seat, if PR had been in place in 1989.



River runs through it: Tom Hackett's Vertical River - created from 288 test tubes filled with Severn water - on show at Worcester City Museum as part of Gallery Week 1997, launched today by Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Photograph: Brian Harris

Tories back London mayor

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

The Conservatives made a U-turn last night to support the idea of a Mayor for London, but they rejected the Government's proposal for an elected assembly for the capital with strategic powers.

Sir Norman Fowler, the Opposition spokesman on the environment including London, said an elected mayor - a Labour manifesto commitment - would give the capital a voice and spearhead efforts to secure inward investment and economic regeneration.

Nick Raynsford, the minister for London, said: "It is ironic that the party which abolished the GLC [Greater London Council] 11 years ago should now belatedly recognise that they made a mistake."

Defending the U-turn Sir Norman said: "We have listened to what the public are saying. The case for a voice for London is a case which in my view has been proved. Policies evolve."

The Tories will support an elected Mayor for London in the referendum to take place next year but they would urge a vote against the assembly.

The Government's Green Paper on the mayor and elected assembly will be published within the next fortnight.

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US-style public defenders set for Britain

Patricia Wynn Davies
Legal Affairs Editor

A controversial American-style "public defender" system is to be tried out in the United Kingdom for the first time as part of a shake-up of the legal aid scheme in Scotland.

Henry McLachlan, the Scottish home affairs minister, said the system, under which an accused is advised and repre-

sented by salaried lawyers employed by the public sector, would be piloted next year.

In a further attempt to cut Scotland's £133.6m legal aid bill, all solicitors providing criminal legal aid will have to register with the Scottish Legal Aid Board and abide by its code of practice.

The number of solicitors' firms in the public defender pilot will be restricted to six and the study may only last for five

years, after which the powers would lapse without fresh legislation. But the development is being widely seen as a precursor to the introduction of the system nationwide.

For the past 12 months, the Lord Chancellor's Department has been considering whether to import the idea to England and Wales, and its potential advantages and savings are currently being studied by Sir Peter

Middleton, the former Treasury mandarin, in his review of the £1.6bn legal aid budget.

At present, accused people on legal aid choose their own lawyers from firms in private practice. Lawyers both sides of the border have largely opposed any change, saying a public defender system would usher in a second-rate service staffed by lawyers who could not get jobs in private practice or the Crown

Prosecution Service. There are also fears about under-funding and the risk that lawyers would be pressurised to extract guilty pleas to save trial costs.

Cameron Fyfe, of Ross Harper & Murphy, a leading Glasgow firm, said: "We are going to have a two-tier system, with the rich choosing their lawyer and the poor being dumped with a public defender. We should look at administration

costs and that in turn would bring the bill down."

But the Law Society of Scotland appeared to concede defeat yesterday. "We have made plain our concerns," John Elliot, the president, said. "However, we are committed to making sure that the public defender experiment is a fair one and to monitoring the results. The Law Society believes that a solicitor chosen by an accused

person provides the best means of representation."

One of the most bizarre examples of the pressures facing US public defenders came in the case of Richard Teisser, a public defender who successfully sued himself, demanding that a judge declare his work inadequate and order the state of Louisiana to provide more resources. But schemes in other jurisdictions appear to have fared better.

Science sheds light on watery Sun

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

There is no water on the Moon, scientists have decided - but there is on the Sun. New studies by a team of researchers in Britain, Canada and the US have found that sunspots, patches on the solar surface which are darker than the rest, actually contain water - albeit at the extremely high temperature of 3000C.

Sunspots are often described as "storms" on the Sun, though astronomers are puzzled as to their exact nature. They have been observed since medieval times, and some people have suggested that their appearance can affect the Earth's weather.

Water could only be identified on the Sun after supercomputers were used to model the behaviour of the substance at very high temperatures.

Spectrometers pointed at the Sun - which monitor the electromagnetic radiation given off by atomic bonds as they vibrate - give results identical to those predicted by the computer models, showing that water molecules are present in sunspot areas.

Though the stellar surface is normally far too hot for any molecules to be created, the team realised that it would be possible for hydrogen and oxygen to come together in sunspots, which are thousands of degrees cooler than the rest of the surface, to form molecules of water.

The latest finding could actually be useful for more earth-bound pursuits. The researchers who made the discovery think that the same technique that they developed could be used to detect forest fires - because the water boiling off from the burning leaves would have a similar radio signature to that found emitted from the sunspots.

Extremists use Internet to spread anti-Semitism

Kathy Marks

Extremist groups are turning to new methods of spreading anti-Semitic propaganda, such as the Internet, in order to surmount it and avoid legal obstacles, according to a survey published today.

The report on global anti-Semitism, by the London-based Institute for Jewish Policy Research, also voices concern about the electoral success of far-right political parties such as the National Front in France and Austria's Freedom Party.

However, it says that overall, incidents of hostility and violence towards Jews continued to decline worldwide in 1996, reversing an upsurge in the late 1980s.

Antony Lerman, director of the institute, said yesterday: "Contemporary anti-Semitism, despite its occasionally violent form and its deeply unpleasant nature, poses little threat to Jewish existence. It is clear that anti-Semitism does not resonate with significant sections of the public in the way that it once did, and that it cannot be used to mobilise anything other than small, insignificant fringe groups."

Militant action against Jews by Islamic communities in a number of countries, including Britain, is an area highlighted by the report. In Britain, decisive action by police has led to a fall in the number of the anti-Semitic incidents for the third consecutive year, it says.

Mr Lerman said new ways were being found of "packaging" and disseminating anti-Jewish sentiment; dressing it up as opposition to Zionism, for instance, or disguising it as pseudo-academic debate in the form of Holocaust denial. "This is because extremists are finding that they cannot get their message across in the traditional forms," he said.

The report, produced jointly with the American Jewish Committee, says the Internet is a growth area for the publication of neo-Nazi material. But this is counterbalanced by the large number of anti-racist Web sites.

The zeal with which racists have embraced the Internet has also facilitated the task of monitoring them, according to the survey. Outlining other developments in 1996, it says



Timely reminder: Herbert Levy with items from the Anne Frank exhibition which runs at Stables Market, Camden Lock, London, until 28 August. Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

there was an anti-Jewish backlash in response to allegations about the conduct of Swiss authorities in relation to gold expropriated from Jews by the Nazis and deposited in Swiss banks. However, the level of

hostility provoked was not as great as had been feared.

In the 60 countries, where anti-Semitism is monitored, the number of incidents fell in 1996, except in Australia. In general, there was less violence in the

form of attacks on people and property, and a greater incidence of verbal threats and anti-Jewish graffiti. This, says the report, was a reversal of the situation a few years ago, and partly the result of improved

policing. Among politicians such as Jean-Marie Le Pen, it says anti-Semitism has been displaced by other forms of racism with more populist appeal. "Jews clearly occupy a low place on the list of propaganda targets,

and are simply one element of a xenophobic world view." The report says the trends identified in 1996 tend to be "specific problems occurring in a climate in which anti-Semitism remains socially unacceptable".

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Teenage 'alcocops' to spy on shops

Jason Bennett
Crime Correspondent

Teenage "alcocops" are to be deployed as undercover detectives to help catch shopkeepers selling alcohol to under-age drinkers.

The initiative is part of a package of measures aimed at curbing the sale of alcohol to youngsters and includes new powers for the police to confiscate alcohol from under-18s drinking in public.

It will also become an offence for adults to buy alcohol from a shop or off-licence for an unsupervised youngster.

But the Government has drawn back from banning alcoholic lemonades such as Hooch and Two Dogs, preferring instead to give the brewers and shopkeepers a final chance to curb under-age drinking.

A ministerial team yesterday backed a revised code of conduct for retailers and drinks makers drawn up by the Portman Group, the drinks industry's self-regulating watchdog.

Under the terms of the new code retailers will be urged not to stock alcocops or any other alcoholic drinks deemed to be targeted at under-18s.

The group has also pledged to expand its ID cards and encourage retailers to insist they be shown at shop tills, although there are doubts that such a voluntary system will work.

The code will also require manufacturers to have their products vetted by its complaints panel before they are launched.

George Howarth, Home Office minister, criticised alcocop makers yesterday, saying: "It's a cynical attempt to snare people who are a very early age" which could lead to a life of crime.

The joint initiative follows a chorus of complaints about the packaging and advertising of the fruit-flavoured alcoholic drinks which have become popular with under-age drinkers.

The main measures announced by the Government are an expansion of the use of teenage "spies", often children of police and trading standards officers, who are used to test whether shopkeepers are breaking the law. At present, the police and trading standards have been reluctant to use this technique very often because of uncertainty about whether it could be challenged in the courts.

The Government plans to introduce legislation to clarify the position. The second initiative is the implementation of police powers to confiscate alcohol from under-18s caught drinking in public. The measure, already on the statute book from the last government, should be in use by early next month.

In a third change, it will become illegal for adults to buy alcohol for youngsters - already an offence in Scotland. However, Mr Howarth added: "We are not trying to stop parents who want to give their children a glass of beer or wine with a meal."

The Magistrates' Association is backing the initiative and urging licensing authorities to take into account whether a retailer has followed the code of conduct when deciding whether to renew his licence.

But Alcohol Concern campaigners said they are worried the measures do not go far enough. Its director, Eric Appleby, said: "They will do little to discourage rogue manufacturers from launching products in which they have invested millions of pounds."

Spot the difference: Hollywood director gets a slap in the face for plagiarising a top British photographer

Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

The director of swing group En Vogue's latest video has had to apologise and offer compensation to one of British fashion's hottest photographers for stealing the idea for the video from a shoot in *The Face* magazine.

Matthew Rolston, one of Hollywood's most established celebrity photographers, has admitted "borrowing too heavily" from a series of gothic fashion photographs by Sean Ellis.

The plagiarised images were from a shoot entitled "Clinic" that appeared in style bible *The Face* earlier this year and were then used in En Vogue's video for its single "Whatever". "There is a difference between reference and rip-off," said Mr Ellis, 26, yesterday. "And this is a clear case of a rip off."

After being threatened with court action for breach of copyright, Mr Rolston has agreed to settle out of court and pay Mr Ellis the equivalent of a day's shooting fee in exchange for using the images. Photographers at Mr Ellis' level can earn £20,000 a day.

En Vogue's record company, Elektra, told *The Face* it was unhappy about the dispute and advised Mr Rolston to talk to Mr Ellis' lawyers. Elektra has now been advised not to talk about the case. And Mr Rolston's lawyers are trying to make the payment to Mr Ellis dependent on him keeping quiet about the plagiarism.

But the photographer was forthright in defending his copyright. "A lot of people get ripped off," he said. "Young talent get their ideas stolen by established talent who are too busy to come up with their own ideas. I thought I was in a position now to do something about it. I don't think Matthew Rolston realised how established I was."

Sean Ellis has been credited with creating a "gothic" style of photography that has moved the fashion world on from its obsession with the so-called "heroin chic" of pale emaciated models. Instead, Mr Ellis uses rich textures with dark images to create a "filmic" style.

"Many directors are influenced by fashion photographers," he added. "You sometimes see a clever reference to your work that takes the idea and pushes it on further and improves it. It is quite different to just copy directly."

Matthew Rolston made his name as a photographer in Hollywood and became known as one of an élite of "superphotographers" who can command high fees and who are in demand by the stars.



The original: Sean Ellis' fashion shoot, Clinic, published in *The Face*



The copy: Stills from En Vogue's video, directed by Matthew Rolston

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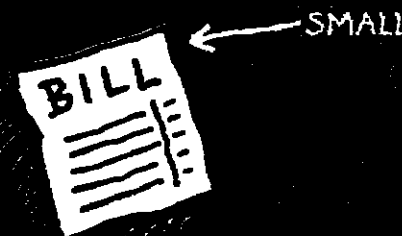
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Practice run: Martin Stanley, 12, from Harwich School in Essex, preparing to test his school's entry in the Shell Mileage Marathon at Silverstone, Northamptonshire, yesterday. A total of 110 teams are taking part in today's event. Photograph: Colin Whyman

The women behind bars who could go free

Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

Seven out of 10 women inmates do not need to be kept behind bars as they pose no security risk, the Chief Inspector of Prisons suggested yesterday in a critical report on conditions for women in jail.

Sir David Ramsbotham made 160 recommendations in

his review and repeated his call for a Director of Women's Prisons to oversee fundamental changes to treatment of female inmates.

The Inspectorate's report, *Women In Prison*, said the current system fails to recognise that female offenders have different needs to males.

Among the findings was that only about 30 per cent of the

current 2,700 women inmates in England and Wales needed to be in closed prisons because they posed a security risk.

Of the remaining 70 per cent Sir David said: "They don't pose a security risk which says they must be in prison. There may well be some for whom another form of sentencing may well be more appropriate."

Sir David suggested the

Prison Service consider building low-security tower block jails to house women in urban areas — an idea rejected by prison officials yesterday.

The need for secure surroundings for some women was illustrated by the news yesterday that a 20-year-old woman inmate who was nine months pregnant had escaped from a maternity hospital and gone

on the run. Rosemary Doherty, had been on remand at Brockhill prison in Worcestershire on a charge of robbery since May but had been transferred to a nearby hospital when she was due to give birth. She had not been under prison guard or police supervision.

Sir David's report expressed particular concern over the number of women prisoners on

remand awaiting trial, when only 34 per cent went on to receive custodial sentences, compared with 47 per cent of men.

Joyce Quin, the Prisons minister, accepted that there was need to reduce the number of women on remand and to speed up the process.

The decision to review of provision for women prisoners had been prompted by conditions at Holloway jail in London which triggered a walk-out by inmates in 1995. The female prison population has risen by 76 per cent in the last four years — twice the rate of men.

The conditions and facilities

for women prisoners with children was also an area of concern. The review found that nearly two-thirds of women interviewed were mothers with on average three children each.

Nearly half the women said they had been physically or sexually abused previously and two-thirds reported having used illegal drugs.

Among the recommendations was a call for improved techniques for strip-searching inmates for drugs, a process which some may associate with previous sexual abuse.

Richard Tilt, the Prison Ser-

vices director general, welcomed the report and said that steps were already under way to implement some of the report's recommendations.

Paul Cavadin, the principal officer of the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, said: "For decades women's prisons have been treated as an afterthought tacked on to the needs of men."

More than half the inmates in some male open young offender institutes are being tested positively for drug-taking, a Home Office study showed yesterday. The average for all jails was 38 per cent.

'Grandma says only bad people go to prison'

Debbie Watson, 23, pushes away her plate of chips and beans and stares through the grilled window.

"I called my kids the other day and my son said: 'Mummy, who have you killed?' I said, 'well, Grandma says you go to prison and only bad people go to prison.' She pauses, and blinks hard. "I had to tell him to ask Grandma because I didn't have time to explain."

It is hard to tell a six-year-old why you can't come home when you only have one phonecard a week. Even harder if, like Debbie, your children are living with your mother in Jamaica, writes Jojo Moyes.

"I write to them a lot," she says. "I can also make an international phone call once a month. But my mother, she

takes it very hard, and she suffers from high blood pressure. When I called and told her what had happened she was admitted to hospital."

Debbie is serving 21 months at Winchester Prison for attempting to smuggle drugs. She helps make up the two thirds of women prisoners who, says the Ramsbotham report, are mothers. Her children, like 75 per cent of inmates' offspring, do not live with their father.

According to Debbie, the worst thing about prison is the separation from her family. Like a growing number of other inmates, who are also convicted drug smugglers, she cannot visit. Her whole life is based around the two letters a week she receives from Jamaica and the classes she is taking in order to re-establish a

normal life when she gets out. "I'm doing education in business studies course," she says.

"The teachers are great, so even if someone winds me up I can go up there. When I get out I'm definitely going to use it. My sister runs a business but she's useless at the books so I'm going to help her."

She gets out next December and will be deported. In one respect, this makes her lucky: she can just tell friends and colleagues that she has been in England, thus escaping the stigma that the women say attaches itself disproportionately to the female convict.

"I'm not going to tell anyone," says Debbie. "A man comes out of prison and suddenly he's a don. A woman comes out and no one wants to know her."

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Doctors suggest prayers for NHS

Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

Prayers and good weather are all that can prevent a crisis in Britain's hospitals this winter unless the Government provides an immediate injection of cash, doctors' leaders warned yesterday.

Dr Sandy Macara, chairman of the British Medical Association, urged patients to pray for fine weather as the National Audit Office released figures showing more than one in three NHS trusts was in financial difficulty last December, and one in ten faced serious problems.

Yesterday the Government named the affected trusts and said the number facing problems had risen since December. NHS trusts in serious difficulty, defined as those failing to meet financial targets and with no recovery programme in place, had almost doubled from 26 in 1995-96 to 47 in 1996-97. In total 168 out of 433 trusts were in some difficulty, the audit office said.

The NHS faces a huge additional burden from the cost of meeting clinical negligence claims, estimated at £2bn to £3bn, that is not recorded in the accounts, the audit office said. Only £80m is provided in the accounts for 1996-97 to meet successful claims, although £1.6bn are identified. "Those are huge sums and a very real liability," a spokeswoman said.

The BMA said the extra £1.2bn allocated to the NHS in the budget from next April would not bridge this year's funding gap and called for another £500m to keep hospitals open this winter. Dr Mac Armstrong, secretary of the association, said hospitals had started the current financial year carrying deficits of at least £200m. A severe winter or a flu epidemic, both of which the country escaped last year, could precipitate a crisis.

"We would have people waiting for trolleys, let alone beds, and people being shuttled round hospitals looking for beds," he said.

However, a briefing paper prepared by the BMA for its annual meeting earlier this month said: "Compared with public expenditure generally, the NHS was generously treated this year."

It said NHS spending had been increased by 4 per cent in cash terms, 2 per cent after allowing for inflation, and current spending on the hospital service was up 5.1 per cent, 3 per cent in real terms.

But Dr Macara said that assessment had not taken account of higher inflation rates or existing financial deficits.

"In real terms, despite the appearance of generosity, the NHS got less this year than last. The situation that is now potentially serious will become critical and perhaps very grave."



New England: Samphire Hoe, built of rock carved from the Channel Tunnel, at the base of Shakespeare Cliff, Dover. Photograph: John Voos

Eurotunnel rock offers platform for recreation

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

A brand new piece of England, set aside for nature and recreation, was formally opened yesterday.

Samphire Hoe, at the base of one of the White Cliffs of Dover, has been created from 5 million cubic metres of chalk and other rock dug out of the Channel Tunnel.

The tunnel spoil was dumped on the beach over six years while the Tunnel was under construction in the late Eighties and early Nineties. It forms a platform nearly a mile long, pushing 300 metres out to sea.

Since then Eurotunnel has done some landscaping, and has installed footpaths, parking, toilets and an office for a warden. Grass and wildflower seed has been sown, and the land is growing green. A variety of birds, butterflies and plants have begun to colonise the site. The only thing left to do was to find a name for this flattened spoil-heap at the base of Shakespeare Cliff, and Jill Janaway, 63, a former teacher from Dover, won a naming competition with "Samphire" - a herb found locally, and mentioned in *King Lear*.

David Johnson of Eurotunnel said: "It is really the public's dividend from the creation of the Channel Tunnel."

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DAILY POEM

The Earthworm's Monologue

By Elizabeth Jennings

Birds prey on me, fish are fond of my flesh.
My body is like a sausage, it lacks the snake's
Sinuous splendour and colour. Yes, I'm absurd.
Yet I also till and soften the soil, I prepare
The way for flowers. Spring depends upon me
At least a little. Mock me if you will.
Cut me in half, I'll come together again.
But haven't you felt a fool, hated your shape,
Wanted to hide? If so I am your friend.
I would sympathise with you were I not so busy
But bend down over me, you who are not yet tall
And be proud of all you contain in a body so small.

© Elizabeth Jennings. "The Earthworm's Monologue" appears in Elizabeth Jennings's selected poems for children, *A Spell of Words* (Macmillan Children's Books, £9.99).

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A fine balance: An acrobat from the 'Strange Fruit in the Field' ensemble rehearsing *Flight*, for its première this weekend at the Royal Festival Hall in London. The piece, which is loosely based on the Greek myth of Daedalus and Icarus (pictured), involves eight acrobats balancing on flexible four-metre poles. Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

Why the English are bad at maths

Lucy Ward
Education Correspondent

English nine-year-olds use calculators more and are taught less often as a whole class in maths lessons than children in countries which far outperform England in the subject, according to international research.

At secondary level, where England also lags well behind other nations in maths, 13-year-olds spend less time than their counterparts abroad on the subject overall and are set less homework.

A study published yesterday examines the influences which could explain the results of a major survey revealing that English children in both age groups struggle in maths compared with their contemporaries in Pacific Rim and other countries but outstrip them in science.

Its findings have already been seized on by David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, as evidence to support the Government's drive for a minimum homework requirement.

In primary schools, children taught maths using traditional whole-class methods – the technique being advocated by the Government for literacy and numeracy teaching – were more likely to gain higher scores in tests set by researchers. Meanwhile, countries – including England – where pupils routinely used calculators, generally did worse in the maths league tables. England's relatively low ranking – tenth out of 17 nations – came despite the fact that primary schools spent more time on maths than virtually every other country in the survey.

However, the study found a very different picture in secondary schools. It revealed English schools were roughly in line with other nations on levels of whole-class teaching in maths lessons, but gave the subject less

time than schools in other countries and set homework less often.

Thirteen-year-old pupils tended to do best in both maths and science in those countries where they had more lesson time and more homework, the research showed.

The findings are the second part of an international maths and science study, carried out in England by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER).

The first part looked at comparative performances of nine- and 13-year-olds in maths and science tests, while the latest section compares underlying factors such as time spent in lessons, class size, styles of teaching, levels of homework and teachers' and students' attitudes.

Researchers in England are particularly interested in the findings for the younger age group, because in primary schools children are taught both maths and science by the same teacher, yet achieve very different results relative to other countries.

Advocates of traditional teaching, including chief schools inspector Chris Woodhead, are likely to point to the study as evidence that whole-class teaching, mental arithmetic and plenty of homework are the crucial factors in achieving good maths results.

The same factors do not appear to have the same influence on science results.

However, Wendy Keys, one of three authors of the NFER report, stressed there might be no causal relationship between teaching styles and results. "I don't want to say that you only have to use whole class teaching and stop using calculators and you have solved it."

"Time spent and homework are the things to be looked at first before we start castigating teachers for not teaching the right way."



Neil Hamilton delivering his rebuttal yesterday

Fair hearing is a big issue for Hamiltons

Kim Sengupta

They feel they are a Mr and Mrs Dreyfus, victims of a terrible injustice.

Former friends and colleagues from the Conservative Party have turned their backs on them, the media have been thirsting for their blood. But Neil and Christine Hamilton say they did receive a fair hearing – from *Living Marxism* and the *Big Issue*.

The two organs, one of the hard left, and the other representing homeless people, have been the only ones which have given "an objective and balanced account" of their problems, said the couple.

Mr Hamilton, whose name has become synonymous with Tory sleaze, yesterday delivered a 30-page rebuttal of the Downey Report which had scathingly condemned his relationship with the Harrods owner, Mohamed Al Fayed, and his conduct as an MP.

In the critique, which Mr Hamilton hopes will be read by the Commons Standards and Privileges Committee on Tuesday, the former MP points out what he claims are major flaws in Sir Gordon's findings.

Mr Hamilton's letter states: "The reality is that Sir Gordon has tried and convicted me on

a charge of corruption. Bribery of an MP is against the law of Parliament and, but for the Bill of Rights, would be a criminal offence triable in a court of law."

"... He relies heavily on evidence which would not be admissible in a court of law and gives no reasons for judgments upon which he bases his conclusions."

Mr Hamilton states in the letter that he continues to "vigorously deny Mohamed Fayed's allegations of corruption."

Mr and Mrs Hamilton told *The Independent* that they had been condemned to a "life sentence" of public humiliation which they are determined to overturn.

Mr Hamilton said: "I have been pilloried by the media. Surprisingly two very fair treatments have come from *Living Marxism* and the *Big Issue*."

"I gather that *Living Marxism* are at odds with Martin Bell because of certain coverage the magazine had done in the former Yugoslavia. And although they are poles apart from me politically, at least they know that I firmly believe in what I stand for."

Mrs Hamilton said: "Gordon Downey crucified Neil and dissected him on a silver platter because that was what was wanted of him. But we are not going to give up."

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Countdown to near-disaster: From left, cosmonaut removes wrong data plug, causing power loss. Using flashlights, crew rush to Soyuz escape module. Mir may now have to be abandoned, leaving it spinning in space. Drawings: David Brown

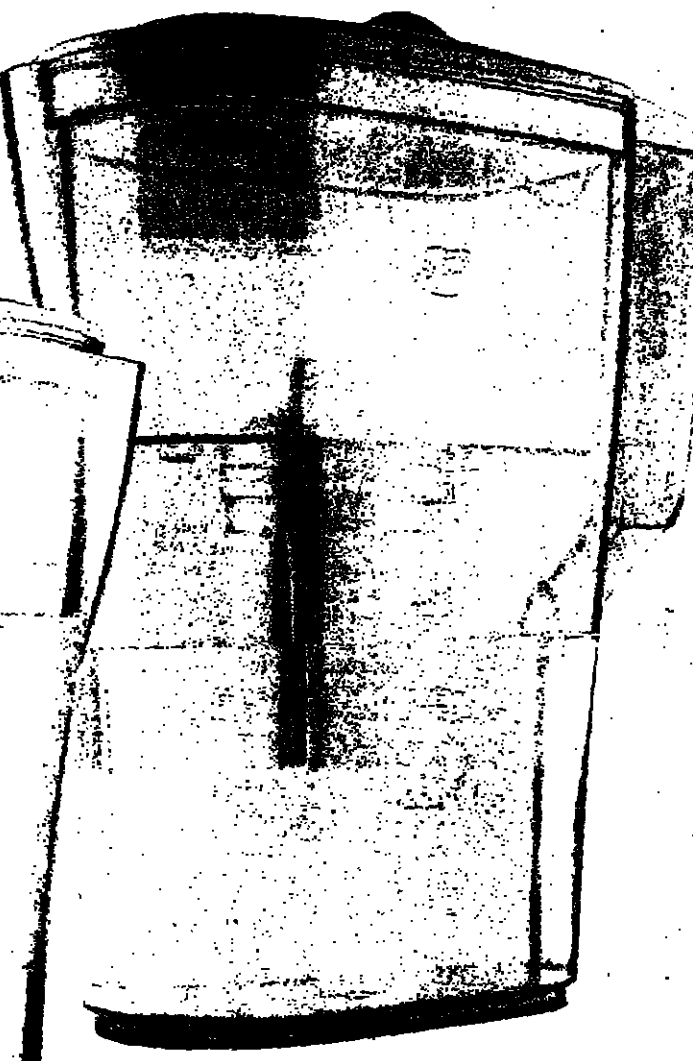
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Mir must wait to take place in history

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

If the astronauts on board the Mir space station have had any time to reflect in the past three weeks, they might reassure themselves that this is not, yet, the worst disaster in space.

That unfortunate title belongs to the Challenger Space Shuttle, which blew up 73 seconds after its launch on 28 January 1986, killing the seven astronauts aboard. (Three US astronauts also died before leaving the ground, when the Apollo 1 module caught fire 10 minutes before it was due to take off on 27 January 1967.)

Nor, despite the darkness and cold, are the three men in the most remote location for a disaster; that dubious title goes to the occupants of Apollo 13, who were 200,000 miles from Earth on 13 April, 1970 when they radioed Houston to tell mission control, famously,

"We've got a problem." By contrast, Mir is about 250 miles above the Earth.

And it has to be said that this is not the first time that things have looked desperate to occupants of Mir. In May 1990, two cosmonauts were reported "stranded" there by damage to their descent module; at least today's occupants have the Soyuz module as a lifeboat back to Earth. The 1990 problem was solved when an unmanned craft was sent out with a ladder to enable the men to carry out external repairs.

However, this is the longest-running crisis in space, and the exhaustion created among the crew means that the slightest error could be fatal. Although the name of the space station means "peace" in Russian, there has been very little of it for the three-man crew in the three weeks since a practice docking manoeuvre went wrong on June 25, causing the first

space collision with a crewed spacecraft. The first 20 minutes after the accident were a terrifying scramble, as British-born Michael Foale, aged 40, heard the hiss of escaping air in the Spektr module where he lived and worked, and had to abandon it at top speed, helped by the captain, Vasili Tsibilyev, 43, and the flight engineer, Alexander Lazutkin, 39.

The blame for the original accident has not yet been placed, but Russian mission control is understood to feel that Commander Tsibilyev was at fault for having used an overloaded cargo module to practice the docking.

Since then, Commander Tsibilyev has developed a heart problem that ground-based doctors suggest is almost certainly stress-related. If the repair mission goes ahead, it has been decided that he will wait in the Soyuz escape craft, while Mr Foale undertakes the dan-

gerous task of going into the darkened Spektr module, where he will have to reconnect the cables that were unhitched.

However, that spacewalk is now planned to occur on the night of July 24-25, and is still being rehearsed in swimming tanks (to reproduce weightlessness) on the ground by Russian technicians at Star City. The latest problems - which occurred when one of the crew accidentally pulled out a cable connecting to the main computer, oxygen generators and power systems - plunged the station to the bare minimum of power needed to keep running.

Mir was first launched on February 20 1986, intended to be a staging post for crewed flights to Mars "by the late 1990s". Instead, it suffered its first setback in April, 1987, when the Kvant astronomy module failed to dock as planned, necessitating a spacewalk to fix the problem.

Politicians struggle to keep mission afloat as risks grow

John Curtin
Washington

The latest calamity to befall Mir has focused attention on the dirty little secret the White House has chosen to ignore: the expense and risk of the enterprise has become utterly disproportionate to its scientific value.

Whatever scientists were going to learn from the limping Russian hulk they have already learnt, and if the US is to continue its commitment to the project it should do so on the understanding that the returns are purely political.

"It's got nothing to do with science," said John Pike, the director of the space policy project at the Federation of American Scientists. "It's a powerfully visible assertion that Russia and America are

partners, not adversaries."

One palpable scientific gain NASA has obtained from the Mir project is the knowledge that the Space Shuttle can dock successfully with a space station. But James Lovell, the astronaut who survived the ill-fated Apollo 13 mission, has noted that after five such missions the US has all the information it could possibly require on docking.

Another objective was to learn about the human body's capacity to withstand long periods of weightlessness. But the consensus among scientists is that the US now knows all it needs to know about that too.

"Mir has done an exceptionally fine job," Mr Lovell said last week. "Now it's time to give it a very respectful retirement."

That is not the view of the White House which, eager to

soothe Russian brows after the tensions generated by recent developments in Nato, remains publicly committed to the project. Though it remains to be seen how keen President Bill Clinton will be to give his blessing to plans under way to send two more American astronauts to Mir after the scheduled return of the current batch in September.

After yesterday's near disaster, he will most certainly come under pressure from Congress to call the whole deal off. "I, for one, can no longer sit idly by as mishap after mishap occurs while we continue to plan the next shuttle mission to Mir, hoping for, but not really expecting, the mission will succeed without a potentially life-threatening situation," said James Sensenbrenner, the Republi-

can congressman who heads the House of Representatives Science Committee.

According to a paper written by the Clear Lake Group, a space policy research organisation in Houston, the ailing space station presents too much of a risk for astronauts. "The signs are obvious that sending American astronauts to Mir is sending them needlessly in harm's way," the paper said. "Space travel, like all forms of movement, is inherently dangerous. Keeping an astronaut on Mir is making it reckless."

The question Congress and Mr Clinton will soon have to confront is whether the diplomatic goodwill reaped by working with the Russians in space is worth the price of America suffering its first fatality in orbit.

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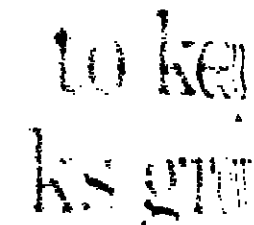
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international

SA crime blamed on old regime's agents

Mary Braid
Johannesburg

With South Africa leading the world in violent crime, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki has finally admitted that lawlessness threatens the country's fledgling democracy and economy.

But his analysis of the cause of the crime explosion and the failure of the justice system to combat it has caused controversy. He says sabotage by former and current security-force members, still loyal to the old apartheid government, is a key factor in the crisis. It is claimed that former security police who joined private security firms are reviving the "Third Force" activities they had used against the ANC to destabilise the new democratic South Africa. In addition, officials hostile to the new government, but trapped in its service, are accepting bribes to pervert justice.

Sidney Mufumadi, safety and security minister, also said international crime syndicates have infiltrated all government departments and that they are aided by disloyal officials. He compares South Africa's crime crisis to that of Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

South Africa is being targeted by crime rings from Nigeria, Yugoslavia, Russia and China. The government is considering introducing laws to stop former intelligence agents selling information to international intelligence agencies or trans-

national crime syndicates. Mr Mufumadi said intelligence networks set up under the old government might be operating as crime organisations and appealed to former operatives to expose their old networks.

There is no way that syndicates can move to foreign territory and set themselves up and operate without the collusion of local elements," Mr Mufumadi said. Politicians of all parties yesterday demanded that the ANC make arrests immediately to back up its claims. The Pan-Africanist Congress said it had suspected former security forces were involved in car hijacking and drug syndicates.

But a National Party MP, Andre Fourie, dismissed it as a desperate move calculated to veil the ANC's failure to defeat crime. He accused Mr Mbeki of denigrating South Africa's security forces. "The ANC conveniently forgets that organised bank robberies formed part of the fund-raising efforts by the liberation movements," Doubts about Mr Mbeki's theory extend beyond the political parties. *Business Day* newspaper has warned the ANC to resist retreating into conspiracy theories. It said evidence of an orchestrated plot was "at best circumstantial". The paper put widespread police corruption down to a general decline in the moral standards.

The ANC is under enormous pressure to combat crime. Johannesburg has the highest murder and hijacking rate in the world outside war zones. Last week tens of thousands of postcards were delivered to President Nelson Mandela's home in Pretoria demanding action.

The ANC comments come as a group of British police advisers said South Africa's crime problem may not be as bad as the public perceived. David Thursfield, deputy Chief Constable of West Mercia, said the South African Police Service (SAPS) was making good progress considering the transformation it was undergoing. It appeared the value of life was lower in South Africa than in Britain but that that was a social, not a policing issue.

North Korea: a nation exporting food while its children starve

Richard Lloyd Parry
Tokyo

Despite a famine which is said to have caused malnutrition in a third of its children, North Korea exported 1,000 tonnes of maize to a Japanese chicken farmer this week. The *Mangyongbong*, a North Korean ship, was last night unloading the last of 1,030 tonnes of maize, according to customs officials at Aomori, northern Japan. They refused to name the customer, but the *Sanki Shimbun* said he is a poultry farmer from Yokohama.

Kaoru Yosano, acting chief spokesman for the Japanese government, said they were investigating the incident, which comes weeks after a renewed appeal by international agencies to make up the 800,000 tonnes of grain they estimate Pyongyang needs to feed its people until the end of this year's harvest.

Japanese intelligence sources speculated that the shipment may have originated in China and been transhipped through the North Korean port of Chongjin by a middleman. Even so, the disclosure that the supposedly starving country has food to sell will spur those who favour

a hard-line approach to North Korea's secretive government. Since it was hit by floods in 1995 there have been suspicions, especially in South Korea, that the food shortage was being exaggerated, and that aid intended for civilians was being diverted for sale or to the country's 1 million troops.

Charity workers, UN officials, and US politicians returning from the North have said many children and old people are close to starvation. "Some of the kids we saw were in a state that I felt if aid doesn't go in, they will not survive," Kathy Zellweger, of the charity Caritas, said on her return to Peking this week. "We are moving to a very, very serious situation if we don't help them now." She said 800,000 children are malnourished, 10 per cent of them seriously, and showed recent photographs of victims with distended stomachs and stick-like limbs.

But accounts suggest it is a selective famine, with parts of the country, including those by the coast, the Chinese border and the gleaming model capital, Pyongyang, relatively unscathed. On Tuesday the US promised \$27m (£16.8m) of food aid in addition to \$25m contributed

earlier in the year. But on Wednesday the Senate voted to bar more economic aid if the North continued to violate the armistice which ended the Korean War in 1953.

A few hours earlier, North and South Korean troops exchanged fire across the demilitarised zone separating the two countries, an incident which was under investigation yesterday by a UN military team. Each side blamed the other for starting the 23-minute gun fight. The North has agreed to meet for peace talks with China, South Korea and the US next

month and intelligence sources believe the incident may have been calculated to give Pyongyang additional leverage by demonstrating its military potential before the meeting.



Video evidence: TV footage of a child being treated for malnutrition in hospital in Hamhung, on the east coast of North Korea

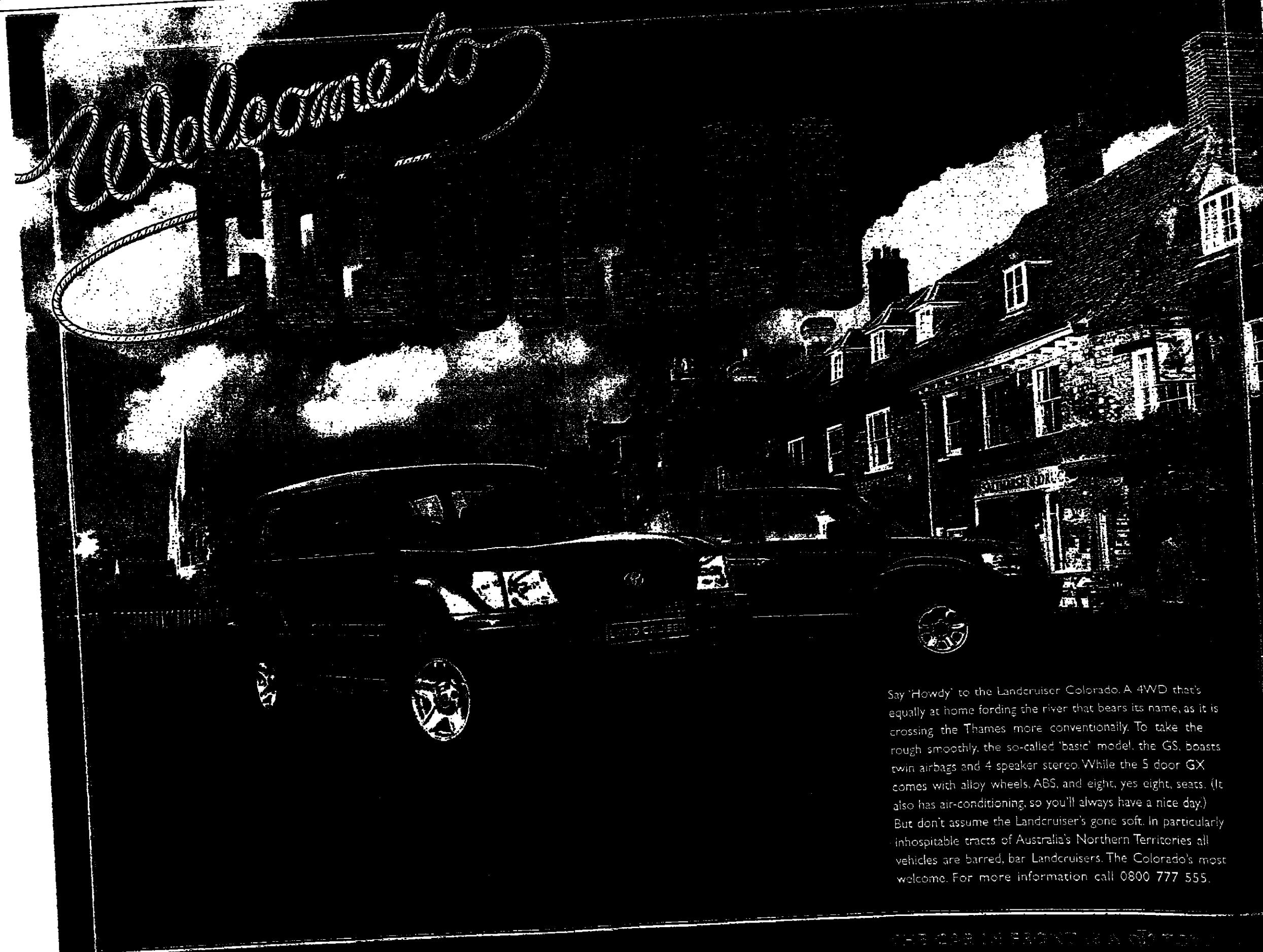
Blasts at Army base in Bosnia

Christopher Bellamy
Defence Correspondent

Four explosive devices, believed to be hand grenades, hit the main British base in Bosnia on Wednesday night, in what appears to be a low-level campaign to harass peace-keeping troops and international monitors after British peace-keeping troops killed one Bosnian Serb war crimes suspect and arrested another a week ago. No one was hurt and there was no serious damage.

British Army sources said the incidents continue to appear isolated and not part of a co-ordinated campaign, and Serb leaders, who have appealed for calm, agreed. Momcilo Krajisnik, the Serb member of the three-man Bosnian presidency, said: "I want to believe these were individual incidents. It would not be good if they were some kind of revenge. They are more an expression of fear and uncertainty because of the existence of secret lists [of indicted war crimes suspects], which raise tensions and cause alarm among the people."

The first three blasts were at 10.45, local time, in the car park of the British base in Banja Luka, the biggest town in the the Serb-controlled part of Bosnia and the headquarters of the British sector, which covers western Bosnia.



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obituaries / gazette

Professor George Dick

George Dick was a giant in the fields of virology, public health and medical education. However, there are many who feel that he was never fully recognised by the medical establishment.

He was born in Glasgow, where his father the Rev David Dick's ministry included the infamous Gorbals slum. At 17 George was admitted to Edinburgh University School of Medicine, graduating in 1938 and joining the RAMC at the outbreak of the Second World War. In 1941 he met and married Brenda Cook, and in 1942 was posted to Somalia, where he was in charge of pathological services, driving hundreds of miles through the desert in a field laboratory with his faithful dog Tabu.

After the war Dick continued viral research in Uganda, the United States and England before accepting the Chair of Bacteriology at Queen's University, Belfast, in 1953. The work in Belfast was prodigious, including research into poliomyelitis, whooping cough, measles and smallpox.

In 1957 he probably saved the entire Irish population of budgerigars from extermination during a public health scare by proving that they could not be carriers of poliovirus. This apparent triviality endeared him to the Irish general public and helped enormously in generating goodwill for subsequent vaccine trials.

Amongst these was one trial which showed that a new oral polio vaccine was unsafe. By vigorously lobbying to prevent the large-scale use of this vaccine in the United Kingdom Dick undoubtedly prevented a huge disaster. This theme of the pursuit of truth and protection of the people runs right through Dick's work.

After witnessing the death of a child following smallpox vaccination, Dick (forearmed of course with the necessary data) began a campaign to stop the use of the vaccine in the United Kingdom, where the disease was only sporadic. It took years

Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease, a degenerative condition of the nervous system, and the rare Marburg virus which mainly occupied him.

Once again he found himself up against the Establishment, defending the claims of CJD victims who had been given growth hormone treatment as an expert witness in legal cases in Britain and Australia.

However, Dick never felt entirely comfortable with the London scene, especially with the proximity of Harley Street - "The Strada" as he called it - and in 1973 he left to become Postgraduate Dean for the South West Thames Regional Health Authority. This new departure was like a breath of fresh air for him. During this time he published *Immunisation* (1978), later reissued as *Practical Immunisation*, 1986, *Immunology of Infectious Diseases* (1979), and *Health on Holiday and Other Travels* (1982), all used by doctors and travellers worldwide. He always nurtured talent in the postgraduate students with encouragement and came down hard on sloppy thinking; nobody was in any doubt of where they stood with him.

As a lifelong champion of better library facilities, Dick was delighted to be honoured with a Fellowship of the Library Association in 1990, and in 1992 he was made Hero of Public Health by Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. But he never received the honours he deserved in his own country.

In retirement Dick continued fund-raising, especially for research and medical education. He is co-author of a paper on the cause of multiple sclerosis to be published in the journal *Brain* next month.

He was a trenchant campaigner on many issues of public concern from nuclear weapons to light pollution, from hospital closures to land mines. As a base for the criticism of establishment views Dick founded the Rowhook Medical Society, which meets at the family home in Sussex. Amongst the wide range of issues taken up by the RMS are refugee health, terminal care, NHS reforms and racial discrimination.

Latterly, as an amateur horticulturist, George Dick looked after the plants in his garden, with the same dedication he gave to his humanitarian and medical work.

Michael Redfern

George Williamson Auchincloss Dick, pathologist and virologist: born Glasgow 14 August 1914; Assistant Pathologist, Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh 1939-40; pathologist, RAMC 1940-46; pathologist, Colonial Medical Research Foundation 1946-51; Rockefeller Institute, New York, and Johns Hopkins University 1947-48; Research Fellow, School of Hygiene and Public Health, Johns Hopkins University 1949-50; staff, Medical Research Council, Queen's University Belfast 1955-65; Director, Bland-Sutton Institute and School of Pathology, Middlesex Hospital Medical School, London University 1966-73; Bland-Sutton Professor of Pathology 1966-73; Professor of Pathology, Honorary Lecturer and Honorary Consultant, Institute of Child Health 1973-81 (Emeritus); Assistant Director, British Postgraduate Medical Federation, and Postgraduate Medical Dean, South West Thames Regional Health Authority 1973-81; married 1941 Brenda Cook (two sons, two daughters); died Maidstone, Kent, 15 July 1997.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

MARRIAGES

CURTIS/GOLDFITZ: In Regensburg, Germany, on 10 July 1997, Susanna, younger daughter of Ann and Adam Curtis, Glasgow, to Horst, elder son of Gerda and Ernst Goldfritz, Aumberg.

DEATHS

BALLARD: On 16 July 1997, Clifford Frederick, Emeritus Professor in Orthodontics, University of London, passed away after a short illness, aged 87. Deeply loved husband of Muriel, and father of Roger and Jill. Funeral service at Salisbury Crematorium on Friday 25 July 1997 at 2.30pm. Family flowers only. Local Press Funeral Home, 55 Winchester Street, Salisbury, Wilt.

PALPFA: Late beloved and loving mother of Ali and George, wife of Patsi, sister of Caroline, Kate and Rose, god-mother of Kristina, Neil and Neil, and a wonderful friend to so many whom she loved. Surrounded by love she died in peace, freed from pain, carried on 14 July. May she be forever on joy. Funeral at Greatham, 12 noon on 24 July. Please after. Donations to Professor Roy Powell's Myeloma Fund at the Royal Marsden or to multiple sclerosis research. Flowers to Greatham Manor, near Pulborough, West Sussex.

Birthdays

Mr Kenneth Armitage, sculptor, 81; Lady Bingley, Research Social Worker, City Corporation, 72; Mr Edward Bond, playwright, 68; Mr Richard Brauman, founder and chairman, Virgin Group, 47; Mr Dave Cash, disc jockey, 55; Mr Christopher Daykin, Government Actuary, 49; Mr Hubert Duggart, cricket historian, 72; Sir William Doughty, deputy chairman, Britannia Reinsed Metals, 72; Viscount Eshor, former Rector, Royal College of Art, 84; Mr Nick Faldo, golfer, 40; Mr John Fraser, former chairman and chief executive, Ciba-Geigy, 66; Senator John Glenn, former astronaut, 76; Mr David Hemery, athlete, 53; Miss Elizabeth Jennings, poet, 71; Mr Dennis Liliec, President of South Africa, 79; Mr Anthony Miles, publisher, 67; Mr Richard Posen, actor, 71; Sir Brooks Richards, former diplomat, 79; Sir Robert Speed QC, former Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, 72; Dr Martin Stephen, High Master, Manchester Grammar School, 48; Professor Hugh Stephenson, journalist, 59; Sir Jamie Stornmonth Darling, former Director, National Trust for Scotland, 79; Mrs

Mary Stott, journalist, 90; Professor Steven Webb MR 32; Dr Basil Wood, former Vice-Chancellor, Nottingham University, 74; Mr Yevgeny Yevushenko, poet, 64.

Anniversaries

Births: Dr William Gilbert Grace, cricketer, 1848. Deaths: Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch), poet and scholar, 1374. On this day: at Chappaquiddick, Massachusetts, a car driven by Senator Edward Kennedy plunged off a narrow bridge, and a passenger, Mary Jo Kopechne, was drowned. 1969. Today is the Feast Day of St Anselm of Auli of Metz, St Bruno of Segni, St Frederick of Utrecht and St Pambo.

Synagogue services

Details of synagogue services to be held tomorrow may be obtained by telephoning the following. Sabbath begins in London at 20.34pm. United Synagogue: 0181-543 8898. Federation of Synagogues: 0181-203 2263. Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues: 0181-439 4721. Synagogue of Great Britain: 0181-439 4721. Synagogue of Great Britain: 0181-439 4721. Synagogue of Great Britain: 0181-439 4721.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh visit the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 18 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 19 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 20 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 21 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 22 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 23 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 24 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 25 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 26 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 27 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 28 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 29 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 30 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 31 July.

Benson Newton, King's Lynn, Norfolk. The Duchess of Kent takes the Salute at the afternoon performance of the Royal Tournament, East Coast, London 1998. Patron Alexander, President Court, London 1998. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 18 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 19 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 20 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 21 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 22 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 23 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 24 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 25 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 26 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 27 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 28 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 29 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 30 July. The Queen Mother visits the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, Portsmouth, on 31 July.



Effulgent: Pountney showing off a gift from a grateful Texan client - a lavatory seat adorned with gold and silver dollars

Len Pountney

Len Pountney was to men's hairdressing what Tassie Weasy Raymond was to ladies' and claimed to have invented the DA (duck's arse) hairstyle common to the Teddy Boys of the 1950s. One of his customers, Patrick Sheehan, recalls: "They were amazing times. Everyone in Middlesex wanted to go to Pountney's and it was always packed out with guys from the West End. Men had never had to book before for haircuts and we would go in groups and then on to parties."

Pountney was an ebullient showman who took men's hairdressing into the world of quality culture, but his business acumen and ability to predict new trends and develop them enabled him to move seamlessly into other areas. Beginning with a barber shop in Hounslow, west London, that he purchased for £300 in 1947 (although he always hated the word "barber"), he created Britain's leading gentlemen's hair stylists, who later introduced hair transplanting and, some 25 years later, evolved into a cosmetic surgery hospital, the Pountney Clinic.

He was born in Islington, north London, in 1913. He became an Amateur Boxing Association semi-finalist and London diving champion and an example of his early energy can be seen in his boxing both as an amateur and, under an assumed name, simultaneously as a professional in order to

provide extras for his family. He served as an army physical training instructor during the Second World War and, inspired by an article about 18th-century wig-makers, purchased his first barber's shop in Hounslow on demobilisation.

He painted the shop red, black and gold and introduced jazz bands and rock-and-roll artists to bemused but happy customers. Free cocktails were served on Caribbean evenings. The local army barracks and bandmen from Kneller Hall (the Royal School of Military Music at Tidworth) were induced to supply squaddies so that he could show the Army how short haircuts need not be demoralising for recruits.

With a Belgian, Paul Rans, he founded the International Union of Masculine Coiffeurs in 1957 and produced shows and judged hairdressing competitions worldwide. Among his early clients were the boxer and actor Freddie Mills and the Great Train Robbers.

Pountney had a great personal interest in disguise. Gerald Nabarro, Cilla Black, the Shah of Iran - even Howard Hughes - are said to have visited him for advice. Russell Hart, who was disguised for television and the journalist Denis Hart, who was disguised in his skills for the *Daily Telegraph* magazine, being turned into a mysterious South American. Hart's own children did not recognise him.

Pountney became a close friend of the television compere Hugh Green and liked to move in show-business circles and keep his own customers entertained with stories of his exploits.

In 1958, following a visit to the United States, he started the Harley Street Hair Clinic, where he specialised in providing hair transplants for men, a technique to reduce the effects of baldness by taking healthy plugs of hair from the back and sides of the head and planting them into the bald areas. Inspired by the financial success of the clinic he enlarged his salon in Hounslow and recruited leading surgeons to provide the essential facts. During the 1960s his face could be seen smiling at passengers from the walls of almost every London Underground station.

A keen royalist, Pountney offered his services to the Royal Family in 1975. He felt that the Duke of Edinburgh could improve his image and regain youthfulness with hair transplants. He received a reply from Buckingham Palace: "The Duke of Edinburgh has asked me to thank you for your letter, the contents of which have been noted."

In 1978 he published a book, *Your Hair: the startling facts*, in which he introduced readers to his theory that a diet of fruit and fish combined with exercise could encourage hair growth. He visited Georgia, a country

noted for the longevity and extreme hairiness of its peasants, where he found proof of his theories. He and his son Roy adopted the diets he brought back and both their heads carried luxuriant growth.

Observing the success of cosmetic surgery in the US, Pountney brought commercially advertised surgery to England for the first time. The backbone of his business had always been hairdressing, but he converted his salon into a specialist clinic for this venture. He again offered his services to the Palace: "I was concerned about the fact that Charles's ears and thought he could be improved greatly. After all, he was always on television and I think the improvement would have given him greater confidence with girls."

Following Pountney's retirement in 1975 he still visited his clinic weekly to ensure that standards had not slipped. He took an active role in the design and construction of his new cosmetic surgery hospital in 1986 and was continually finding new ways to promote the business.

Both his sons, Alec and Roy, were champion hairdressers and trichologists.

David Butler

Leonard Pountney, hairdresser: born London 6 February 1913; married 1933 Frances Hoyle (one son, and one son deceased); died Bournemouth, Dorset 1 July 1997.

The Rev Dr Norman Pittenger

Those 90 books... Every time I heard Norman Pittenger describe himself as "the Barbara Cartland of theology" the phrase grated on my ears, writes Miles Halls [further to the obituary by Andrew Brown, 28 June]. Not only because it was so misleading, but because the self-mockery was painfully, transparently thin. The phrase was a defence mechanism, and it saddened his friends that he should feel the need of it.

Norman was in fact a pastoral moralist of extraordinary ef-

fectiveness and insight, but he evaluated himself not against the good that he did, nor against other workers in his own field, but tragically, against a quite different species, academic moral theologians. He never took the measure of all the good

that he had done. I was never sure that he truly believed that he had done any.

His real quality was evident to anyone who took the trouble to make him talk about things he cared about, rather than merely let him make conversa-

tion; and those 90 books were bought and read as tracts for the times. Tens of thousands of people who grew up under the cold shadow of modern Christianity will hope that for Norman Pittenger, at least, there is an afterlife: one where he found

waiting for him a comfortable Chair in Moral and Pastoral Theology, academic honours, genuine and disinterested love of course, and an audience in whose respect, gratitude and affection he could - at last - find it possible to have faith.



Wiles: maverick liberal

Peter John de la Fosse Wiles, economist: born 25 November 1919; Fellow, All Souls College, Oxford 1947-48; Fellow, New College, Oxford 1948-60; Professor, Brandeis University 1960-63; Research Associate, Institut für Internationale Ökonomik, Stockholm 1963-64; Professor of Russian Social and Economic Studies, London University 1965-85 (Emeritus Professor of Sovietology and Economics); FBA 1990; books include *The Political Economy of Communism* 1962, *Communist International Economics* 1968, *Economic Institutions Compared* 1977, *Die Parallelschicht* 1981; married 1945 Elizabeth Coppel (one son, two daughters; marriage dissolved 1960); 1960 Carolyn Steadman; died London 14 July 1997.

Meghnad Desai

As in his early but sadly neglected economics text *Price, Cost and Output* (1962), he waged his battle at the micro-economic level as well as at other levels. He, like others of his contemporaries, Henry Phelps Brown and the Nobel Laureate Wassily Leontief, wanted his economics to be firmly grounded in fact, not pure theories.

Peter Wiles will be remembered for his style, which was provocative but full of fun. He was helpful to his students while being a stern taskmaster. The demise of Sovietology would not have worried him in the slightest, but the triumph of the free market would. In this, as in many other things, he was a maverick liberal who cared as much about equality as he did about freedom.

Jurisdiction on appeal against refusal to grant asylum

LAW REPORT

18 July 1997

Regions v Secretary of State for the Home Department and another, ex parte Robinson; Court of Appeal (Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Potter and Lord Justice Brooke) 11 July 1997

The Immigration Appeal Tribunal had jurisdiction to consider a question arising under the "internal flight alternative" on an appeal under section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993 against the refusal of leave to enter the United Kingdom.

The Court of Appeal dismissed the applicant's application for judicial review of the decision of the Immigration Appeal Tribunal to refuse leave to appeal against the refusal of his asylum application.

The applicant was a Sri Lankan Tamil. The Special Adjudicator had held that the mere fact of his past connection with the Tamil Tigers would not, *ipso facto*, lead to a risk of persecution, and that although he could not reasonably be expected to return to an area of Sri Lanka controlled by the Tamil Tigers he would not be at particular or unusual risk if returned to Colombo.

Nicholas Blake QC and Raza Husain (Nathan & Co) for the applicant; David Patrick QC and Alison Foster (Treasury Solicitor) for the Home Secretary; Mark Shaw (Treasury Solicitor) for the Immigration Appeal Tribunal.

Lord Woolf MR handed down the judgment of the court, which had been primarily prepared by Brooke LJ. The appeal raised three points of general importance: the scope of what was often called "the internal flight alternative", which was linked with the definition of "refugee" in the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, as amended by the 1967 Protocol; whether the appellate authorities handling appeals under the Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993 had jurisdiction to consider issues relating to the internal flight alternative; and the scope of the duty, if any, on the Immigration Appeal Tribunal to consider issues which were not apparent on the face of a Notice of Ap-

peal when it decided whether to grant leave to appeal from a Special Adjudicator.

It had been accepted by counsel for the Home Secretary that it was appropriate to interpret the country's obligations under the Convention by reference to paragraph 91 of the *Handbook on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status*, published in 1979 by the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

In those circumstances, if a question arose whether an applicant for asylum might reasonably live in another part of his home country where he had no fear of persecution, the answer to that question went directly to the issue whether he should be properly treated as a "refugee" within the meaning of the Convention.

The reason why that was important in the present context was that the jurisdiction of the appellate authorities in asylum cases was derived exclusively from section 8(1) of the

Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993. The Immigration Appeal Tribunal had concluded in three cases decided between February 1995 and December 1996 that they had no jurisdiction to consider a question arising under the internal flight alternative because they did not believe that it impinged on this country's obligations under the Convention.

It had been assumed in two recent cases in the Court of Appeal, without hearing argument, that those issues could be considered on a section 8 appeal: see *Secretary of State for the Home Department v Ikhlaq* (unreported, 16 April 1997) and *R v Immigration Appeal Tribunal, ex p Shanvetharan* (unreported, 21 May 1997). The assumption on which those two cases acted was correct in law.

The Home Secretary and the appellate authorities would do well in future to adopt the approach that where it appeared that persecution was

confined to a specific part of a country's territory the decision maker should ask whether the claimant could find effective protection in another part of his own territory to which he or she might reasonably be expected to move.

The appellate authorities were not limited in their consideration of the facts by the arguments actually advanced by the asylum seeker or his representative. They were required, however, to engage in a search for new points, and only should only take account of a point which had a strong prospect of success if argued.

Applying those principles to the present case, although it was clear that living in Colombo still created problems for Tamils from the north, it was far from being an obvious case of Colombo not being a safe haven or internal flight alternative, and the Tribunal had not erred in law in failing to recognise that the special adjudicator had not expressly dealt with it as such. The application was therefore dismissed.

Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

A favourable answer to the Camilla Question

Should we care about Camilla? It is now plain as day that she and the Prince of Wales want to get married and are running a massive public relations operation: to try to influence opinion in her favour. This is not, perhaps, as important for the future of the British Constitution as yesterday's decision by the Cabinet to hold the 1999 European elections on a proportional system. If two divorcees want to marry, it is difficult to follow the train of connections which make any difference to the lives of the rest of us, whereas the lapping of the tide of fair voting around the Gothic pillars of the Palace of Westminster could presage a democratic revolution. But the two issues are connected. This is not to argue, as some Conservatives do, that the Constitution is a finely balanced and complex structure that will collapse if any part of it is tampered with. Nor is it right to argue, as republicans do, that our archaic status as "subjects" rather than "citizens" inhibits democracy, and that electing a head of state would automatically free the people from the yoke of ancient superstition.

Part of the significance of the Camilla Campaign is that it reveals the extent to which we now have a democratic monarchy. Prince Charles realises that he can only get what he wants if the British public allow him to. This is an imperfect democratisation,

to be sure, with the main tests of public opinion being newspaper polls, but it is no bad thing that he is forced to take his case to the people.

If Charles is to win sympathy and support, however, he will have to go further and, to borrow from the language of the new government, offer us a "people's monarchy". He has already convened a modern-day witan to advise him on the options. The manifesto it came up with included a cut in the list of official royals, allowing daughters to succeed to the throne on the same terms as sons, and cutting the link with the Church of England. These three proposals are welcome, although only the first can be acted on while the present Queen is alive.

The issue the witan dodged was money – taxpayers' money, to be more precise. A scheme was floated by the Prince's spin doctors for him to be given a chunk of land and property from the Crown Estate. The scaled-down Royal Family could then be supported on the income it generated, rather than having to go cap-in-hand to an increasingly resentful House of Commons every 10 years. This would be unsatisfactory, simply reversing the original transfer of the Crown Estate in return for the Civil List. And it would be a step in the wrong direction, because a people's monarchy should be more, not less, accountable to the people through their elected



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representatives. If the monarch needs a public subsidy, the case for it should be made, regularly, in the House of Commons (and the Crown Estate belongs to the nation, not to the Royal Family as individuals).

The battle for public approval brings Prince Charles squarely into the political bear-pit. It is another measure of the Royal Family's deference to democracy that the Prince of Wales has been doing the rounds of the new government in the hope that some of the New Labour magic will rub off on him. All that old hocus-pocus about the monarch's

role being to advise and warn was never very true – Stanley Baldwin had to advise Edward VIII about the state of public opinion in 1936 – but now it has been fully reversed. Because Tony Blair is regarded not only as the king of public opinion, but also as having a constitutional obligation to advise Charles what to do, the Camilla Question presents the Prime Minister with a tricky problem. Perhaps this will be one of the first issues to be put to the 5,000-strong People's Panel, when the Government sets it up.

Tricky, yes – but the outline of the

advice which should be given to Charles and Camilla is simpler than it might seem at first glance. Of course they can marry, in which case she would have to be called Queen. But they would have to do so on the same basis as everyone else. It is neither possible nor desirable that the Royal Family should somehow exemplify a "better" morality than most of the rest of us can aspire to. If we accept that Tom, Dick and Harriet can split up and start new families, then we can accept it for Charles, Diana and Camilla. But their part of the deal is that they scale down their pretensions. We need a more modest monarchy, more visibly in touch with popular values, making fewer and better-justified demands on the public purse.

What sends some clerics and traditionalists running around in ever-decreasing circles is the prospect of breaking the link between church and state. Apart from noting a quaint symmetry between the birth of the Church of England in one royal divorce-and-remarriage, and its death in another four centuries later, this is not worth dwelling on. Anyone who has failed to notice that Anglicanism is in no meaningful sense the state religion is supremely unqualified to advise Charles on anything. Disestablishment will solve most of the problems surrounding the remarriage issue.

So the question of what to do with Camilla (many happy returns for yesterday, by the way) does not have much to do with the price of milk, or with jobs, education and health. But if the price of her rehabilitation is bringing the monarchy closer to the people, then it is a price worth paying. And if it is part of a thorough-going modernisation of our democracy, in which power indeed lies in accountable hands, then so much the better.

'Literature', at a cinema near you

The mystery of the record £750,000 advance for three novels from an unpublished author has been solved, we report today. It turns out that Keri Beavis's manuscripts have been bought up as screenplays, with the Hollywood end of the deal close to being signed. Publishing is coming closer to being simply an arm of the film industry. Parents will already know: Rudyard Kipling's original *Jungle Book* is a museum piece and most homes are more likely to have the Disney cartoon book of the film than a copy of the original. Instead of "now a major film" on books, films will soon carry the legend: "Now a minor book."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Europe must fight US air threat

Sir: The proposed merger between Boeing and McDonnell Douglas (MDC) represents a huge concentration of market power and technical expertise. Turnover for the new Boeing Corporation is estimated at £48bn. Europe has been right to resist this merger because of the threat to the European aerospace industry.

US justifications for the merger argue that it is a question of national security. MDC is presented as a vital defence asset which has been in financial difficulty and is secured by the takeover. But Boeing/MDC together will have nearly 90 per cent of aircraft in service on the world's airlines. This has enormous effects regarding maintenance, servicing and regulation. MDC also has niche markets where Boeing is absent and a presence in regions where Boeing diplomacy has not borne fruit. Clearly the merger has serious consequences on the commercial side.

The Pentagon has long provided vast resources for research and development which benefit commercial manufacturers. The US is a monopoly provider of security to countries it defines as friendly. High technology defence assets are a diplomatic tool and can be used to smooth or even guarantee commercial orders. Here Europe's weakness as a provider of security is a key factor and leaders should take note.

The market power of Boeing/MDC will be awesome. Boeing will have leading products in civil aeronautics, defence and space. Boeing will be able to offer the Pentagon unrivalled systems integration capabilities. The merger will create a Leviathan not subject to market constraints.

The merger increases pressure on Airbus and makes greater support imperative. The 1992 Bilateral Agreement is inequitable and should be scrapped. Restrictions on indirect support in the US cannot be policed. Everyone knows the US industry receives massive support from NASA, and the Department of Defense, but it is difficult to quantify.

We should bear in mind that Europe is in substantial deficit with the US in aerospace trade. If a trade war is to be threatened then who has the most to lose? Europe must beware of overestimating US power.

If the merger goes ahead the EU should not be afraid to take tough decisions. Europe must substantially increase the budget for aeronautics R&D. A blueprint should be drawn up for rationalisation of the European aerospace industry. If Brussels cannot do this it should be done intergovernmentally by the key aerospace countries.

Europe needs to realise the scale of the US threat and to decide on the actions necessary to secure its own aerospace future. By the end of the century it will be too late.

Professor PHILIP LAWRENCE
Director, Aerospace Research Group
University of the West of England
Bristol

Dr DEREK BRADDOCK
Associate Director, Centre for Social and Economic Research, UWE, Bristol
Dr ANDERS HANSSON
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Dr VITTORIO FIORINI
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Professor DIETER SCHMITT
Department of Aeronautical Engineering, Technical University of Munich

HORST PREM
Technology Consultant, Ludwig Bölkow Foundation, Munich
PAUL DOWDALL
Senior Fellow, Research Unit in Defence Economics, UWE, Bristol



Yet another curb on firearms

Sir: Alun Michael, Minister of State at the Home Office, says the Government is going to look again at all gun controls once the ban on handguns is completed ("Purge on rifles and shotguns", 17 July).

If the Government is about to announce a new round of firearms restrictions, this time on rifles, shotguns and airguns, it should say so now. Many former legitimate handgun owners are now replacing these with legitimate alternatives, either for sport or for pest control. Unexpected further restrictions will be unfair on those involved – and place an even larger compensation burden on the taxpayer.

Two major pieces of legislation restricting handguns in less than a year can perhaps be excused by a change of government. Three separate shots at it in a year is simply bad government.

MATTHEW TAYLOR MP
(Truro and St Austell, Lib Dem)
House of Commons
London SW1

Sir: I wonder why the Home Office wants to "look at what other firearms controls are needed to safeguard the public". The Home Office minister Alun Michael gives no indication that the current legislation and administrative practice is in any way deficient. In the absence of any evidence to indicate there is a problem, the setting up of a review will look less like a concern for public safety and more like an attack on legal gun ownership for ideological reasons.

The great raft of firearms law that is already on the statute books

provides effective remedies against those who misuse any firearms, including air weapons. Rather than imposing further restrictions, the police and the courts must operate the criminal justice system in an efficient manner. Young people are already heavily controlled when it comes to the possession of firearms. No evidence has been advanced to suggest that these restrictions are in any way inadequate.

Whilst the number of shotgun certificates has fallen by over 25 per cent since 1989, armed crime has risen dramatically during the same period. This is the real problem that the police and Home Office ought to be addressing.

WILLIAM HARRIMAN
Marford, Clwyd

'Red plot' just a signals mix-up

Sir: In citing "mid-1943" as the time when British liaison officers with Mihailovic's Chetniks in Serbia began to think that Special Operations Executive (SOE) Cairo moles must be sabotaging their telegrams, Aleksa Gavrilovic (Letters, 11 July) evidently did not know about the cipher crisis which hit SOE just at that time. It affected all of us in the Balkans, as the number of missions expanded more quickly than anyone had foreseen.

Staff shortages mainly affected the cipher office, which was fast approaching gridlock, pending the arrival of additional trained staff being rushed from Britain. Many of our more senior liaison officers in the field, familiar with conventional army procedures and radio networks, could not understand that clandestine communications from enemy territory had to be organised along completely different lines. Unfamiliar with all the technical problems involved, some officers, perhaps not surprisingly, were inclined to attribute the delays to sabotage.

We in Signals investigated some of the worst cases at great length. Of course some mistakes were made. But I never came across any examples of culpable negligence, let alone deliberate sabotage.

H W KING
Oban
Argyll

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Law fails the servants of God

Sir: Apart from Fr Nicolson (Letter, 15 July), I'm sure I'm not the only Anglican priest who feels very concerned at the Court of Appeal's refusal to allow Fr Alex Coker to pursue his case for unfair dismissal (report, 12 July). Lord Justice Staughton's remark on the impossibility of serving documents on God is silly as well as insensitive.

I am not in a position to argue the rights and wrongs of Fr Coker's case. Maybe justice was done by the bishop, but it has not been seen to be done; maybe injustice has been done, but we shall never know. I certainly think the employment protection law should be changed to include all licensed Anglican clergy, because as things stand bishops wield unaccountable power over them, sometimes resulting in sackings, sometimes being moved elsewhere for reasons which will not stand up to close scrutiny.

Can the Church be content with a lower standard of personnel management than that enacted in the law of the land? If a bishop claims the right to fire a priest on the grounds that God is his employer, then what right has the bishop to hire a priest?

Fr JOHN YOUNG
Leicester

country's remaining road schemes was expected to confirm that latent demand for road space would overwhelm any attempt to provide more of it. The Midlands and the South-east are the most congested parts of the country. But it is precisely in these areas that latent demand is at its highest, which is why funding for local road-building has now switched to public transport improvements.

Those of us working and living in highly congested areas were well aware of the need to ration car use. A national travel awareness campaign, Travewise, is now flourishing in 50 local authorities around the country, and local Agenda 21 groups are taking on the important issue of traffic reduction as part of the UK's Rio commitment.

Policy on the road to collapse

Sir: It is impossible to square a government policy of traffic restraint with plans to continue large-scale road-building. In opposition, the Labour Party were adamantly against "predict and provide", recognising that traffic congestion could be solved only through a modal shift away from the car. Now it seems that all that has changed.

If your article "Green blow as road schemes get go-ahead" (16 July) is correct, we have a collapse of government transport policy on our hands. The Department of Transport's latest review of the

country's remaining road schemes was expected to confirm that latent demand for road space would overwhelm any attempt to provide more of it. The Midlands and the South-east are the most congested parts of the country. But it is precisely in these areas that latent demand is at its highest, which is why funding for local road-building has now switched to public transport improvements.

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I sincerely hope that next week's announcement will contain no surprise and that we can all continue to support a government which will not make the mistakes of the previous administration.

MATT BEALE-COLLINS
London SE24

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Cash in

Sir: Further to your recent correspondence on delays in clearing cheques, the simplest method to stop the bank from messing around with one's account would be actually to visit your bank, withdraw cash from your account and then hand in cash to the required account to be credited.

Not only would your withdrawal be noted at once but the second account would also be credited at once, not with five days' delay.

H W BAKER
Tunbridge Wells, Kent

Unjust bar on older workers

Sir: There are thousands of older unemployed people in Britain who are desperate to work at almost any job and almost any wage but who are turned down for employment time after time because they are considered too old ("Across the Atlantic: grey power is the US secret weapon", 9 July).

In a recent survey, about 13 per cent of older people had been openly turned down for jobs because they were "too old". A further 8 per cent were turned down because they were "overqualified". But many other employers, questioned by would-be workers about the reasons for their rejection, admitted that applicants were automatically disqualified by being in their forties or fifties.

Various ways of helping mature people back to work have been propounded. Most never get off the ground, and those that do totter along shakily from year to year because they need money for essentials, such as a roof over their heads, electricity, telephones and stationery. Not vast sums. Not the £6,000m it is costing the country to keep over-45-year-olds on benefits every year. Not the £3bn the Government proposes to put into welfare-to-work for a relatively few under-25-year-olds. Unfortunately the two obvious sources for such funding, the Employment Service and the Training and Enterprise Councils, are for the most part unwilling to find even these modest funds.

Should "delayed" accountants and engineers, "downsized" marketing men and secretaries, "redundant" salesmen, "failed" entrepreneurs and "early retired" teachers and bank managers hang around on street corners, drinking from cans and frightening old ladies? Should they put bricks through shop windows in moments of frustration? Should they shout and swear and threaten? Should even more of them commit suicide than already do? Is this an essential step to work?

No one expects the Government to solve the problem of mature unemployment overnight, but hope could be restored if, unlike its predecessor, it could persuade the Employment Service and the TECs to support organisations working for this cause.

JULIA CEVANS
Brecon, Powys

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analysis

In his new report, Sir David Ramsbotham, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, condemns the treatment of female prisoners. Jojo Moyes talks to inmates about the price they pay for their crimes and wonders whether their imprisonment does not often impose higher costs than benefits



A menace to society? In the past four years, there has been a 76 per cent increase in the number of women imprisoned

Double stigma for women in jail

It is an unnerving feeling to find yourself on the wrong side of the prison door. On a visit to Winchester, I had been sitting on a prison bed, making the most of an opportunity to talk to inmates, when a woman appeared at the door. "You do realise you're locked in, don't you?" she said. "I don't think they know you're still here."

I left the room, and walked to the locked grille, trying to look less unsettled than I felt. Through the bars was a shiny, empty corridor. Behind me was the cacophony of noise that comes when 11 incarcerated women make the most of "free association".

"It's all right," said the woman. "Look, you can buzz them. They'll come and get you out."

Ally was not so lucky. She sat on her bed by the window, under the posters of George Clooney and photographs of her 16-year-old son. "I lost my house in the second week on remand. In fact, I've lost everything. I didn't think I was going down, so I hadn't even taken anything round my mum's

Then the Social called me and told me someone had nicked my furniture."

It is a simple truth, oft repeated by authorities and prisoners alike, that women in prison have a lot more to lose than men. Since changes in housing benefit rules in 1995, most of them lose their homes, being unable to pay the rent. They lose their children: only 32 per cent are looked after by fathers or grandmothers. The vast majority of women are deserted by their partners ("usually to their best friend," one prisoner remarks wryly), and when they come out they have to contend with the "double stigma" of being a female offender.

Yet, in the past four years, there has been a 76 per cent increase in the number of women imprisoned. These are not always the violent women of popular myth (in fact, violent crimes by women dropped by 16 per cent in the same period). Asked by the Ramsbotham report what had led to their imprisonment, out of 24 possible categories nearly a third of inmates surveyed ticked

"Alcohol/drugs", while 18 per cent named "Need for money, or debt". To hear their stories is to wonder how the monetary cost – and the social cost – of putting these women in jail balances any benefit.

Ally's new home is the women's annex at Winchester Prison. She shares it with 84 other women, many of whom have been there since it was opened in 1995 as part of the prison service's attempts to accommodate the increase. It is not bad, she says. The women have painted it pink, and the carefully tended prison garden and hanging washing detract from the looming men's prison next door. The signs requesting women "not to use the door as an ashtray – it kills the cockroaches" are apparently a joke.

Winchester is, however, a far cry from some of the women's units identified in the Ramsbotham report, such as Low Newton, whose facilities "are not sufficient to meet the needs of unsentenced women prisoners", or Risley, whose "ongoing problems... lead us to recommend that there should be an alternative local

prison". Winchester's "best practice" is far from the "serious inadequacies in the overall organisation and management of prisons for women in this country".

"It's like a week in a shopping centre, here. It's better than Holloway, anyway. That's a hell-hole. When I first went in I was in such a state they gave me valium, kept me valiumed up," says Ally, adding, "I might have been a good thing. The Independent was told that there would be no press access to Holloway."

At Winchester, the inmates have an unusual degree of freedom. They are allowed access to each other's rooms even when their landing is locked, and most of them take education or gym classes on a daily basis. They write endless letters to cope with confinement. Some, such as Ally, correspond daily with male prisoners, as "they understand how important letters are".

The staff, they say, "are all right. They come in every morning bang on the windows to make sure we haven't loosened the panes. It's quite funny," says Ally. Her roommate, Wendy, says that they are not allowed to put posters on the outside wall, since the film *The Shawshank Redemption* showed an inmate digging an escape hole behind his poster.

Like Ally, Wendy, 39, is a first-time offender, serving four years related to drugs importation. According to the Ramsbotham report, 45 per cent of female prisoners have no previous convictions, and 70 per cent have not been in prison before.

"I was stupid, because I had a good job," says Wendy. "I just wanted to provide for my family. My mum had gone bankrupt, there were family prob-

lems, and I was providing here there and everywhere. They offered me more money than I could earn in a year..." She tails off, embarrassed. She asks me not to use her full name; some of her family still believe she is working abroad.

Ask any of the women what are the hardest things about prison, and they say the same: being separated from their families; their guilt at having left their children; and having dis-

she'd left me £10, it had cost her £75."

But she is not complaining. In a previous prison she did not see her children at all. This is not uncommon. According to prison staff and campaigners, foster parents are often judgemental about the women's crimes, and won't bring children to visit.

"Even when the women ring up, the kids are always just having their dinner," says Petronella Davis, who is welfare advice officer for the Creative and Support Trust (CST), based in north London. "I've known couples where both parents are in prison; the man got to see his kids, but the foster mother thought that if the woman was in prison, she must be a very, very bad person."

Children, she says, take the separation hard. They wet the bed, have nightmares, play up at home and school. Ally's son lives with his grandmother. "He doesn't show much emotion, because of his age. But he's not doing too well," Ally says quietly. "Not really."

The worst time in the prison, say the staff, is 3.45pm on visiting day, shortly before children have to leave. "It is heart-breaking," says one. "But the women go back to their landing and take care of each other."

Winchester's unusually relaxed atmosphere is partly due, staff say, to the high proportion of drugs couriers in the prison ("I'd rather have them than someone in for GBH, ABH or arson," says one officer). But the governor, Richard Cavanagh, who has worked in the prison service for 26 years, says that most women's prisons have huge problems with bullying and self-harm. Bullying at Winchester is "not unknown", but is firmly dealt with. He ascribes the low level

of self-harm to the women's freedom to move around and keep occupied, and to the officers' willingness to talk.

"These women do lose everything," he says. "The majority of prisoners who harm themselves have done it out of sheer frustration, because no one will listen. Once they feel safe, and heard, you can work with them."

Wendy and Ally look after each other. Both are now counting the days until their release dates. But their problems are unlikely to end there. When the Ramsbotham report asked women prisoners what would help them not to re-offend, the top three answers were: a home; a job; support. According to welfare workers, however, these are precisely the things that may elude them when they finish their sentence.

Petronella Davis says that many women's first day out of prison is spent at a homeless persons' unit, to get them and their children some form of temporary accommodation. Getting a job can be even more problematic. The women know this, and say that just as they feel more shame than men, they are judged more harshly.

Groups such as Women In Prison say this is partly due to the demonisation of women criminals, and the media "myth" of the increasingly violent woman. These views, they say, are translated into the practice of the courts.

"I think we have to get these figures into proportion. There's been all this stuff about 'Tank Girl', girl gangs, books with titles like *Deadlier Than The Male*," says Women In Prison's director, Chris Tchaikovsky. "Yet there are currently 2,500 men serving time for murder, and 99 women. You have a 27 times greater chance of being

murdered by a man." Last month the National Association of Probation Officers concluded that there "did appear to be evidence that a harsher sentencing climate had evolved" for women.

It is not just the women themselves who bear the cost. To the taxpayer's burden of keeping a woman in prison must often be added the cost of placing her children in care, the cost of rehoming them when they leave, the cost of keeping a family on benefits when the woman finds it difficult to get a job. And that is before you consider the cost to society of fractured families and damaged children.

Meanwhile, Winchester's female prison population has increased by 25 per cent in two years. At present, its recidivism rate, like its social problems, is unusually low, but David Cavanagh says the prison's careful balancing act will not be maintained if he is forced to accommodate any more women.

As the grille closes on Wendy and Ally's landing, I ask him whether he is concerned about the huge rise in the number of women prisoners. Mindful of his position, I say that he can speak off the record, but he declines. "I think the prison service is wise to separate itself from sentencing policy," he says carefully.

OK, I say, bearing in mind the women you see, do you think that a similar decrease in the women's prison population would create a significant risk to the public?

"I think courts would need to revisit reasons why they send people to prison," he says, smiling. And I am let out – through the metal grilles, and into the bright sunshine.

ABBEY NATIONAL INTEREST RATES

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Pox-hunting and other country tales

Well, it's midsummer again, and time for country walks, and rambles in the fields, and being shouted at by angry farmers, and finding footpaths blocked by barbed wire, and all that sort of thing that the British do so well.

Not unnaturally I am being inundated with queries about life in the countryside. And that means it is time again to bring on our go-nonsense nature expert, Herb Robert, to answer all your questions on wildlife – all yours, Herbie!

Why do dead fish float on the surface of rivers and canals?

Herb Robert writes: So that seagulls can eat them. Next!

Why are wagtails called wagtails?

Herb Robert writes: Because they wag their tails. Next!

No, no, hold on a minute, that's not strictly true, is it? I mean, dogs wag their tails from side to side, which is what we call wagging. But wagtails oscillate their tails up

and down, which is more like nodding. They should be called nodtails, if anything.

Herb Robert writes: All right, wise guy. Let's take this one slowly. What do humans do when they are in disagreement?

They say, "I disagree". Herb Robert writes: Yes, yes, but if they don't say anything? If they just use body language?

They shake their heads. Herb Robert writes: Ah ha! So when humans do it to their heads, it's called shaking, but when dogs do it to their tails it's called wagging, is that right?

Yes, I suppose so. Herb Robert writes: You're just a troublemaker. Next!

I have often heard it said that animals who are in danger like to be downwind of their attackers. That is, a rabbit can smell a fox upwind, and a fox can smell hounds upwind and so on.

Herb Robert writes: Yes, yes... So it makes sense for animals to get to windward of their attackers, or potential



Miles Kingston

attackers. Herb Robert writes: Yes, yes... Well, as the prevailing wind in Britain is a west wind, which blows most of the time, an animal to the east of its hunter can always smell it, so you would expect animals in Britain to move to the east – on the whole – to be in a safer position.

Herb Robert writes: Yes, yes... Therefore, over a long period of time, you would expect a general drift to the east of the island among

hunted animals, followed of course by their hunters. So it would only be natural if you found that the eastern side of Britain was much more heavily populated by animals who were moving to the east to avoid being smelt, and that the west was almost completely denuded of animals. Is this in fact so?

Herb Robert writes: No. You are talking rubbish. Attractive rubbish, but still rubbish.

Do you approve of pox-hunting?

Herb Robert writes: I most certainly do. The quest to eradicate smallpox was one of the most exciting missions of modern man. Ah, yes, many's the time I've been out in the early dawn with a bunch of pink-coated scientists, chasing the pox over dale and hill!

And now I'm glad to say the little bugger has been eradicated. No more smallpox! Geese and chickens can now sleep safe at night, knowing they will never have dreadfully scarred faces. Of course, that means no more pox-

hunting, and sometimes I miss the old days, but I think this is a small price to pay...

Sorry – did I say "pox-hunting"? Of course I meant "fox-hunting".

Herb Robert writes: Now, there are some people who were vehemently against pox-hunting, and said that a virus was just as much God's creation as a human being, and of course we had lots of trouble with saboteurs in the laboratory – I'm sorry? Did you say something?

Yes. The other day, at the far edge of a field, I noticed three birds hovering absolutely motionless side by side. They were so still you couldn't even see the wings moving. Then a fourth bird joined them in this strange hovering performance. But directly overhead the other three. What on earth was going on?

Herb Robert writes: They were sitting on telephone wires, you idiot.

Thanks again, Herbie. Keep those nature inquiries rolling in!

Euro elections could break the Tories' patched-up party

Yesterday's Cabinet decision to hold the 1999 European elections under proportional representation may appear at first glance of interest only to constitutional reform anoraks. It is anything but. For the hugely relieved Liberal Democrats, it not only yields up more electoral territory to win, it also exorcises a demon: the memory of David Steel's failure to extract that very reform in return for propping up Jim Callaghan's minority government 20 years ago. But it is schism in the Tory party that remains by far the most seismic of its potential consequences.



Donald MacIntyre

All the omens are that Mr Hague will insist on a manifesto which will be hard to stomach for at least 15 of the 18 sitting Tory MPs

That there was not more evidence of a Tory split after William Hague's election as leader was due more to the vanquished than to the victor. Kenneth Clarke paid a magnanimous visit to Mr Hague's victory party. He then went on to persuade deeply hesitant figures on the pro-European left of the party – such as Stephen Dorrell, David Curry and Ian Taylor – to accept posts in the shadow team, despite Mr Hague's Euroscepticism. They did so under a novel formula which relieved them of the obligation to defend Mr Hague's promise to oppose for at least 10 years British entry into a single currency, but required them not to attack it, either. Does this not look, on the face of it, a party desperate to reunite at almost any price? Why on earth, therefore, should it break apart over something as trivial and hitherto mind-numbingly uninteresting to the public as elections to the European Parliament?

The reasons have to do in about equal measure with the principles and personal ambitions of some not very well-known Tory politicians, those who either hold, or aspire to hold, seats as members of the EU parliament.

It is theoretically possible that Mr Hague will draw up for the European elections a manifesto so bland that even the most ardent pro-European could comfortably live with it. It is doubtful, however, whether dominant figures of the Shadow Cabinet, the Howards, Lilleys and Redwoods, would allow him to do that, even if he wanted to. The notion that a referendum on the Amsterdam treaty, given the new administration's current popularity and the modesty of the changes agreed at the summit, would result in anything but a huge victory for the Government, is absurd; but that did not stop Mr Hague calling for one. Mr Howard, in particular, has not let up in trying to commit the party to renegotiating, under threat of withdrawal, the terms of British membership of the EU, something he fondly imagines may prove an election winner in 2001 or 2002. All the omens are that Mr Hague will insist on a manifesto that at the very least reiterates outright opposition to British EMU membership on any foreseeable timetable, and which would therefore be hard to stomach for at least 15 of the 18 sitting Conservative MEPs, not to mention those of the ex-MEPs who aspire to return to Strasbourg.

That might not be enough on its own to provoke a breakaway; but it may well be compounded by the party's choice of candidates. First, most of the party's incumbent MEPs come from the South-east, so there will be fierce competition among them for limited places on the same regional list. Second, the leader will be under intense pressure to purge some of those notoriously pro-European per-

sons from the candidates list – or at least to put them sufficiently low down the lists to give them little chance of victory. So there may be a practical, as well as a principled, reason for these Strasbourg aspirants to form their own pro-European centre-right grouping, with their own candidates' list, manifesto and business backing; namely, that it would, thanks to a PR system, provide easily their best (perhaps their only) chance of being elected.

What, supposing these heady events so unfolded, would be the role of the party's still biggest active politician, Mr Clarke? It is still doubtful that he, and therefore his supporters on the front bench, would overtly support a 1999 breakaway of that sort. But a respectable showing by such a grouping would carry its own momentum: for one thing, it would create a new constituency within Conservatism whose interests lay in securing PR for Westminster, thus making a "yes" vote in a referendum on Commons electoral reform all the more likely.

There is an irony here; throughout his political life Mr Clarke has been a committed first-past-the-post man. But if a referendum delivered PR for the Commons, then, and perhaps not until then, the temptation for him, and perhaps Chris Patten too, to create a new business-friendly, broadly pro-European party of the centre right would surely be irresistible.

For despite the doubts clouding the future of EMU, it is not going to follow the Europhobes. Next week's report of the CBI survey on EMU will show that while the membership was divided over whether Britain should enter a single currency in the first wave – and voted on balance against it – it dismissed by a large majority the Hague notion of ruling it out for a decade. The CBI has probably never before diverged so decisively from Conservative party policy.

Conversely, Gordon Brown's speech yesterday, emphatically keeping open the option of EMU membership, emphasises the harmony between CBI thinking and New Labour's. A new Cabinet subcommittee is to consider party funding, but Blair's personal inclinations – unlike those of many in his party – have tended against state funding. It is a sign of how far times have changed that because of the parties' respective attitudes on Europe, Mr Hague may be more starved of business funding – and therefore more in need of state funds – than Labour.

All this provides the prospect, enticing for Labour, of a split Conservative party, guaranteeing a Blair premiership for several parliaments. But yesterday's decision, momentous as it is, doesn't guarantee that Mr Blair will back Commons PR (or even the not truly proportional Alternative Vote system, a compromise still being advocated by Peter Mandelson). He isn't, genuinely, yet persuaded of the case for reform. He wants the long-term hegemony that it would help to confer; but he has surely not given up all hope that he can have it without a change to the electoral system, and without presiding over a multi-party coalition.

The European elections nevertheless provide a laboratory in which to test the impact of electoral reform. Kenneth Clarke is one politician who will be waiting and watching for the results; the other is Tony Blair.

The not so discreet objects of desire

by Suzanne Moore

Unlike Suzy Menkes I can't claim that I have had the honour of being banned from a Versace fashion show. All I can say is that I once had a ticket to one in Milan and couldn't be bothered. This was not because I didn't try, simply that I wasn't made of strong enough stuff to face the scrum of shrieking fashion editors who were showing their way in. I merely observed from the sidelines women sobbing because their jobs depended on seeing this collection of sound-bite, rock 'n' roll, "do me" dresses. Now that the great man is dead these same fashion editors, whose expertise depends on knowing 24 words for taupe, are having to stretch their vocabularies to find words to describe murder and blood and rent-boys. Real life has momentarily interrupted their fantasy world in the form of real death.

Or am I being unfair? Hasn't fashion always dealt with "issues" other than whether white was the new black, whether bags were in or out, whether women over size 8 should be allowed out in public never mind the catwalk, whether junkies wearing mantillas held up by what look like human remains are really cutting edge, whether anything ever really matters if you have the perfect beige cashmere sweater? Fashion, after all, is a serious business and we should take it seriously. The fashion world has been devastated by AIDS, they care enormously about the environment and breast cancer and racism and they have benefits and make clothes that encourage world peace.

OK, so it's easy enough to sneer at this trivial, insular and self-indulgent little planet. As Boris Johnson said of Versace's death, "Contemplating the headlines, many of us feel we are rubbing our noses up against the windowpane of a secret world that speaks a private language." What will they say when someone really great dies, he wailed. Of course the world of high fashion may appear like this, but is it any more insular and secret than the worlds of politics, of art, of film? Each of these worlds has its insiders, its stars, its cheerleaders and its dissidents. Each of these worlds has a language and a structure that the average punter does not fully understand. If anything fashion by its very nature is the most democratic of art forms. We are all dressed in the morning, we all make fashion decisions whether consciously or not. Even the person who says "I never think about what I look like" has already thought about it.

Yet our confusion about the relationship of fashion to the rest of the world has been highlighted by this shocking event. Versace has been painted a lone genius rather than head of a large creative team who actually produced his vision. For designers like Versace there is



always life after death, because trade marks live forever. His Medusa buttons enable instant brand recognition, which is important for the kind of people who want to be branded in this way. Clothes were only part of his massive empire. As with Yves St Laurent and Calvin Klein, the name itself has become a commodity.

The outpouring of grief from

Versace, we see a time in which Post-Aids "Look but don't touch" culture was on the rise, in which women were questioning power and what it meant to be a working woman, in which the *nouveau riche* wanted both to be classy and classless, expensively tasteless and in which the cult of celebrity recruited entire populations. While other designers,

were neither revolutionary nor reactionary, just an astute businessman who sold no more and no less than what has always been sold to women. There were very few Versace frocks that could be worn with underwear. It matters not whether Versace was gay or straight for despite the much-vaunted shock value of his boudoir imagination, he designed clothes that

their book *Women and Fashion*. "The issue becomes one of the wearer's libido, rather than one of 'being attractive'." Westwood fosters the idea of a self-defined feminine libido, however demediated, which communicates itself idiosyncratically through dress... The sexiness she expounds is autonomous: if the wearer thinks it is sexy, then it is. It is this autonomy, the opening up of sexuality that makes Westwood such an exciting designer, more transgressive than someone like Versace could ever be.

To complain then that fashion is somehow insignificant is to miss the point. It is precisely about making the insignificant signify something, about giving meaning to a cut, a button, a texture, a look. The fact that people spend vast amounts of money in order to demonstrate their individuality and all end up looking the same is the great paradox that drives it to continually restyle itself. Whatever its losses, the fashion world will continue churning out its clothes and we will continue to desire and dismiss them in the same breath. As Versace's death illustrates, even when the emperor is naked there are always those ready to rip the new clothes off his still warm corpse and say they are the greatest thing ever.

Despite the much vaunted shock value, Versace designed clothes that were essentially sexually conservative

the fashion cognoscenti has been somewhat over the top even for those whose profession is going over the top. Gianni "You are fashion" Versace may have been the ultimate fashion victim but he has not died for any particular cause.

The muddle over whether he was a misogynist or, as he claimed, able to give back "femininity" to women is further evidence of our schizophrenic attitude to fashion. There is no other popular art form that we would treat so simplistically. Nor would we place it in a vacuum devoid of historical and cultural context. So we have Versace who, with his tarty, showy frocks, emphasised sexual availability as a source of power for women, who helped them play once more; or we have Versace, the gay misogynist who squeezed women into tacky dresses inspired by the prostitutes he saw as a boy.

Yet if we look at the rise of

such as his rival Armani, and Donna Karan, were designing functional clothes that women could wear at work, day to evening wear, Versace made clothes that were definitely for going out in, for showing off in. This was power dressing for those whose power rested on pay and display and they appealed to everyone from East End girls to genuinely powerful women such as Madonna and Demi Moore.

Such decadence depended on a sense of artifice that is intrinsic to fashion, for if clothes are not about surface, identity and fantasy what are they about? Versace's frocks were for women who in John Berger's famous description "Watch themselves being looked at... The surveyor of women in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object..." Versace merely gave women a guiding hand in what they were already skilled at. He

were essentially sexually conservative in that their very function was to turn women from subjects to objects. The twist was that women chose this for themselves.

Contrast this approach with a designer like Vivienne Westwood who, for all her battiness, talks of sexiness as being about what feels sexy to the woman herself. "At my age I'd rather have a bit of flab, I actually think that's more sexy. I like my own body." As Caroline Evans and Minna Thornton say in

Lines in praise of 'traditional' poetry

Can 'on the page' poets compete with a performance superstar? No contest, says Ruth Padell

"We want you", said the Breakfast BBC producer, "to have an informal discussion with a poet who's getting a million pounds for a CD. We want a traditional poet to put another perspective. We'll be asking questions like, 'Can traditional poetry survive?'"

"What do you mean by traditional?" I asked. There was one of those deep phone silences when you hear milli-miles of wire writhing away under London. I had a guess.

"Do you mean 'poetry on the page?'" "Yes," she said. "As opposed to poetry for the young. Poetry on disc."

She was voicing an assumption which can't be round the media every day, that poetry is "difficult", traditional and, therefore, like fox-hunting, endangered. Its habitat is the page, another traditional, endangered thing. Poetry's "way forward" must involve the two touchstones of modernity, electronics and "the young".

In fact, "the young" from 13 to 20 read and buy poetry by the ton. It gets listened to, talked about passionately, joyfully, all over the country, everywhere from pubs to schools to prisons to the Internet – by the young. Many of the best poets live by teaching in schools. It is hard, badly paid work; but is creating – for the country, if you're going to be grand about it – a body of "the young" who think poetry by living poets addresses issues in their own lives, can be playful as well as serious, and is out there for them.

They know some poets are more "difficult" than others, but trust them to communicate, as good pop lyrics do. After a reading by Carol Anne Duffy, Paul Durcan, Jo Shapcott, Simon Armitage or Heaney, there are signing queues a mile long, swarming with people under 20.

The sorts of people who don't buy poetry may include thirty-something mediafolk, but not "the young".

"Can poetry survive without electronics?"

No question. "It survives," said WH Aude of *Four Weddings and a Funeral* fame in his even more famous elegy for Yeats, "in the valley of its making. A way of happening. A mouth." It survives because people need it, write it, think with it. They welcome it on the tube. Poets are economically challenged, publishers sign up cookery books to compensate money lost on a poetry list, but poetry itself is alive and saying new things in new ways; keeping in touch with its past, with what's happening in other places, eager to take new risks. Pity more people don't go for it, but that's their loss. Poetry will survive without them. Whether they survive without poetry is another question.

Poetry's into electronics already. It is huge on the Internet. But for electronics you need electricity; electronics is a parasite on the culture, as you realise when the power goes down at a supermarket. Poetry is there in a crisis, the power cut, the sudden bereavement, the dic-



A hit? Murray Lachlan Young, EMI's £1m poet, with his butler Daily Record

tatorship. Even pages stay around. People buy *The Independent Daily Poem* to kitchen, cupboard, where it yellows happily for years, meaning new things long after CDs get scratched. I like the idea of EMI putting out a poetry album, but it's not going to affect people's enduring need for and response to poetry.

The guy I was set up to meet was Murray Lachlan Young. He did a year at Media Performance College, does charismatic satire in nightclubs, and now has that million-pound deal with EMI plus a £250,000 contract with MTV. Good luck to him, I felt; but he didn't seem to feel the same about me when our eyes met in the make-up mirror. I said

I thought poets should be generous to each other. Murray emphatically agreed, though his idea of it seemed a bit one-way. He wasn't conspicuously generous to poets who'd said his work was crap. "Can't get published themselves," he said, "that wasn't true."

I hope he sells. I think the idea's fun. One friend of mine, whose opinion I'd take over most people's, enjoys Murray's performance

cabaret numbers. Her favourite is a straight man getting outed at a gay bar. But on the page, the work is – well, there's sometimes a nice tension between the Christmas curdy, traditionally predictable thump and rhyme, and the sting of the situation. He's getting money for presentation, not poetry. Kids reared on "Poetry in Schools", surfing the poetry magazines on the Internet, will want something more musically interesting, and generous. Maybe it wasn't very nice to say that on telly; but I wished him well, and you've got to risk people not being nice to you for a million pounds.

And it's not much of a risk compared with some. I'm reading a new book of poems called *Impedimenta* (retailing at £3) by the Protestant Ulster poet Adrian Rice, who knows more about poetry and risk than Murray ever will. Joke, witty, subtle, his poems have a go at the values of his particularly sensitive community, in a particularly sensitive time.

The more honour to his community, you'd say, for producing a poet who questions it from within. But not everyone agrees. A poem from his last book was about Masons giving out "jobs for the boys", and he happened to be in The Honest Ulsterman when his brother, a policeman, was having a laugh with a couple of colleagues. One suddenly asked, "Would that be your brother's poem?" "It would," he said. "Bit close to the bone, was it?" Banter about this aspect of Protestant life was standard on the housing estate where the Rice boys grew up. But things flipped at this point. "Does your brother want his house burnt down?"

Poetry on the page and in the mind – musically designed, deeply felt words, shared dangerously between audience and poet – has always mattered and always will. Whatever EMI gets up to.

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COMMENT

Although the European Commission has stuck rigidly to its line that Boeing's takeover of McDonnell Douglas will distort competition, it will do no such thing

This merger is not worth going to war over

Will Washington and Brussels really go to war over Boeing? Although the stand-off is plainly serious, as the flexing of political muscles on both sides of the Atlantic demonstrates, the betting must still be on one or both parties blinking before it is time to scramble the bombers.

Here's why. Although the European Commission has stuck rigidly to its line that Boeing's takeover of McDonnell Douglas will distort competition, it will do no such thing. The European Commission has spotted an opportunity to squeeze maximum advantage out of the situation for its own jet champion, Airbus Industrie, and is playing its hand accordingly.

In truth, there are really very few anti-trust considerations involved, as the US Federal Trade Commission has already ruled. True, the merger would increase Boeing's share of the commercial airline market but only by 4 per cent. Moreover, even after swallowing up McDonnell Douglas, Boeing would still be left with a smaller share of the market than it enjoyed 10 years ago, thanks to the inroads Europe's Airbus Industrie has made.

When the Boeing deal was first unveiled there was barely a squeak from Airbus. Indeed the view trickling out of Toulouse was that the merger might actually work to its advantage by creating a more orderly market and reminding the world's airlines that if they still wanted a choice then Airbus was the only other player in town.

Since then there has been much comment in Brussels about how Boeing's scope for

sweetheart exclusive supply deals with airlines would be enhanced. But will carriers really want to freeze Airbus out? The lesson of how Boeing has ruthlessly exploited its monopoly of the jumbo jet market for the last two decades is one that will not be forgotten quickly by the airline industry.

For all that, the Commission's objections to the deal do not seem fundamental enough to go to war over. However, that is not going to stop Brussels using the deal as a pretext for prizing concessions out of the Americans in other areas - starting with a tightening of the rules governing the support given to their aerospace industries through the enormous research programmes run by the US Defense Department and NASA.

This is not the first trade dispute between the two blocs and it will not be the last. The good news is that since there are no principles at stake, they should be able to horse-trade their way out of the current fix.

People must be forced to save for old age

There is something particularly irritating about the fact that the way Harriet Harman, social security minister, bangs on about having "inherited" a huge pensions challenge from the previous Government, as if her predecessors never bothered to think about it. Unfortunately, waving one of New Labour's strategic reviews, magic wand like,

over the problem is not going to solve it. Nonetheless, if having a review helps everyone come to terms with the inevitable and all too painful conclusion that people must be "forced" to save for their old age, then it is only to be welcomed.

Strangely enough, the pensions problem faced by Britain is the exact opposite of the one that exists in Germany, France and Italy. The problem in Britain is the inadequate nature of the state pension - which is nowhere near a living wage - and the fact that a very significant proportion of the workforce fails to make any further provision for retirement. Forcing the pensions industry into providing better value for money, security and flexibility, as the OFT this week proposed, would certainly help matters, but it doesn't provide a solution itself.

On the Continent the promised benefit of pay as you go pension arrangements are by comparison very generous, but the tax raised to pay for them increasingly inadequate. It is hard to know which is the more difficult problem. In Britain the challenge is to find ways of improving retirement benefits for all without significantly adding to the tax burden; on the Continent it is that of cutting benefit to a level governments can afford. Either way, however, the challenge faced by politicians is broadly similar - it is that of persuading the public that if they want reasonable pension benefits for all, they are going to have to pay for them.

Whether this is done through the state, or

the private sector, is largely irrelevant. The bottom line is that people will have to be compelled to save. Unfortunately, that is always bound to look like a form of taxation. In grasping this truth, Peter Lilley's much maligned proposals for privatising the state pension and changing it from a pay-as-you-go scheme to a funded investment approach, provides a useful blueprint. After the political capital Labour made out of these proposals during the election, the new Government couldn't possibly use the plans to the way intended, as a substitute for the basic state pension.

Suitably refigured, however, they could be used as a way of providing reasonably fair second tier pension arrangements. The justification for compulsion in pensions provision is an obvious one. Without compulsion, it is those who save voluntarily who are forced to pick up the tab for those who don't. Even so, this is not going to be an easy thing to sell to the electorate. Ms Harman's review might ease the process, but it doesn't make it any more palatable.

M&S deal may be small but it's also significant

So, conservative old Marks & Sparks is stumping up nearly £200m for 19 branches of crummy old Littlewoods. Is this a sign of a new, more aggressive expansion from the behemoth of Baker Street? Or just another example of relentless, measured growth

by the Rolls Royce of British retailing?

It is certainly a rare occurrence. M&S has not done a major deal since Brooks Brothers in the heady days of the 1980s. This is obviously not a huge transaction for M&S, but it is not without significance all the same. There are not many opportunities to snap up this amount of prime high street retail space and M&S seems to have moved swiftly to beat off rivals like Boots and Kingfisher. Obviously, this is more of a property deal than anything else. There is no goodwill write-off, and no redundancies or stock write-offs to worry about. All that is for Littlewoods, M&S simply gets 19 new stores, changes the name over the door, gets the refurbishment people in and away it goes.

In fact this deal says a lot more about Littlewoods than it does about M&S. Having failed to flag the high street stores as a job lot it is now selling its biggest, and in many cases, best stores, to a rival. It will be left with around 100 smaller branches which it may or may not rebrand under the Berketex name. With the deal to buy Freemans home shopping from Sears still subject to an extended MMC inquiry and a pools business under the cash from the lottery, Littlewoods seems beset on all sides with problems. James Ross, the chairman, faces the prospect of his revised strategy for the group going up in smoke. Since the controlling Mowles family are not exactly backwards in letting management know what they think, it could be an interesting few months in Liverpool.

Marks & Spencer pays £193m for Littlewoods' prime stores

Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

Marks & Spencer made its first big acquisition in more than a decade yesterday when it agreed to pay £193.5m for 19 Littlewoods stores. The deal is the largest by M&S since the purchase of Brooks Brothers in the United States in the 1980s. It is thought to be the company's largest ever UK transaction.

Announcing the deal to shareholders at the company's annual meeting in central London yesterday, M&S's chairman, Sir Richard Greenbury, said it was "an outstanding opportunity" which underlined the company's continued confidence in the future of the high street.

"We expect to start fitting out the stores next February and we'll be ready to open them pro-

gressively through the year," he said. He added that the stores were "all in places where we have been seeking extra footage for years". The extra 600,000 sq ft of space would be in addition to the 1.4 million sq ft expansion already planned over the next three years, Sir Richard said.

The deal will be completed next February and the stores will be re-branded under the Marks & Spencer name. The 19 branches are some of Littlewoods' largest, meaning some will be refurbished to take a full M&S offer. Others will be converted to food halls, home furnishings stores or outlets specialising in menswear or womenswear.

Up to 1,800 Littlewoods jobs will be affected though 80 per cent of these are part time. The redundancies will be Littlewoods' responsibility, with analysts expecting a cost of around

£10m excluding stock write-offs. However, M&S said it would create an unspecified number of jobs as a result of the deal.

M&S put in a bid to Littlewoods right at the beginning of the sale process in March and beat off rival offers from Boots and Kingfisher. Sean Eddie of NatWest Securities said: "It's a good deal, but fully priced."

The sale of the stores is part of a revised Littlewoods strategy by the group's chairman, James Ross, after plans to sell the entire high street chain fell through. Though the company was clearly pleased at the price the sites had fetched, analysts said the company had sold its best stores, leaving the prospects for the remainder uncertain.

Mr Ross shrugged off such criticisms yesterday, saying: "The sale of these stores realises significant value from a small group

of our larger properties. The board of Littlewoods was always clear that it would not sell the stores business if it could realise greater value from revitalising the businesses and reconfiguring the property portfolio."

The 19 stores are scattered across the country in locations such as Bath, Belfast, Cardiff, Derby and Chester. The flagship store at London's Marble Arch is also included.

Littlewoods is expected to sell another four or five stores and close several others leaving it with a portfolio of around 100. These will be re-launched with a new format focusing more on menswear and the Berketex brand. In time, all the Littlewoods stores may be rebranded under the Berketex name.

The announcement from M&S was combined with an update on current trading. This

showed that clothing sales in the UK had increased by nearly 10 per cent in the first quarter led by strong sales of womenswear. Home furnishings sales were 16 per cent ahead. In food, sales in June and July are running at 3.5 per cent above last year.

At the shareholders meeting Sir Richard was forced to defend the appointment of David Sieff as a non-executive director of the company. Mr Sieff is the son of former M&S chairman, Lord Sieff. He stepped down from an executive role in April but was appointed as a non-executive.

Sir Richard denied the move was contrary to guidelines on corporate governance. "I don't accept the Cadbury recommendations in respect of the very special circumstances associated with David Sieff," he added. "The name Sieff in Marks & Spencer means a great deal."

Michael Harrison

British Steel yesterday launched a £155m share buy-back, designed to revive its flagging share price and bolster earnings which have been hammered by the strength of sterling.

The company's brokers, Cazenove, have repurchased just under 100 million shares - about 5 per cent of British Steel's equity - at a maximum of 155p each.

The market reacted favourably to the buy-back, marking British Steel shares up by 10p to 159.5p.

British Steel gained shareholder approval to buy back up to 10 per cent of its share capital at last year's annual meeting, and it hinted that a repurchase might be on the cards alongside its preliminary results last month.

These showed that profits collapsed by 60 per cent to

£451m last year because of the pound's strength against the German mark - the currency in which steel is traded in Europe - and price weakness.

At the time analysts were pencilling in a further drop in profits this year to between £150m and £200m.

Since then sterling has strengthened still further, breaching the DM3 mark, while the Budget inflicted more pain with the abolition of dividend tax credits. There has also been another rise in interest rates, boosting the pound further.

Although steel prices have begun to harden and British Steel is accelerating its programme of job cuts, John Bowden, director of investor relations, said it would only partially offset the strength of sterling.

The company is assuming an average exchange rate this year

of DM2.75 to the pound against DM1.46 last year.

"Essentially our balance sheet was healthy but our shares were very depressed and we thought they were also undervalued," Mr Bowden said.

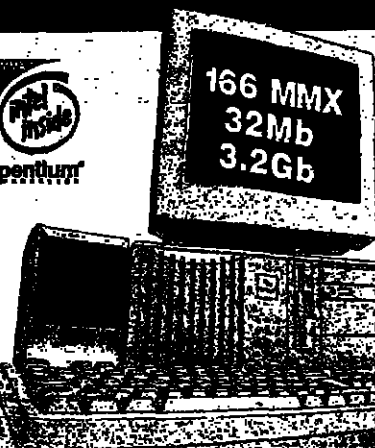
British Steel had net cash of £785m at the end of last year and paid a dividend of 10p.

Even with the share buy-back, the dividend may not be covered by earnings this year if British Steel holds the payout and profits fall as sharply as analysts forecast.

One broker believes British Steel will actually make a loss this year.

The shares had been propped up by heavy US buying, with investors in New York treating British Steel as a highly-gearred play on currency movements, and prices. A 2 per cent movement in prices this year will be enough to raise or lower profits by £150m.

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business

Microsoft scours world for employees

Cathy Newman

Bill Gates' Microsoft is set to capitalise on its global dominance with plans to expand its US workforce by 19 per cent through the recruitment of 3,600 people within the next year.

Microsoft's chief operating officer, Robert Herbold, said he wanted the West Coast of America to remain "the centre of the universe for the software business". However, he said he and his colleagues would have to look outside the US for many of the new workers, as good software developers were in short supply in the States.

Mr Herbold said: "Finding enough software developers in the United States is difficult, and we have to be looking outside the country. We already are."

A spokesman for Microsoft said 800 new recruits would replace departing workers, 2,000 would take up posts at the company's suburban Seattle headquarters, and 800 would look after sales, service and marketing around the country.

Mr Herbold said he would identify potential employees in countries such as Ireland, home to the company's European manufacturing and distribution centre, India and China.

However, Mr Herbold did sound a note of caution, saying that in some markets the company had cut staff numbers to improve efficiency. The Dublin manufacturing outfit has shed 92 workers over the past nine months and 47 jobs went from a similar centre in Humacao, Puerto Rico.

Mr Herbold said there were limits to Microsoft's growth in the Seattle area and in Redmond, Washington.

Speaking about Microsoft's interactive media division, which includes high-profile projects such as the Microsoft Network online service, he said it was still an experiment and not yet a business.

"We put down projections when we think it will be making money," he said. "But the one thing about this area that is certain is that uncertainty rules."

He said profits in the emerging business could soar when 50 per cent of the nation's households were hooked up to the Internet, which he said would create an "inflection point". It was possible that point could be reached in 2001, he said.



Bill Gates: Has plans to expand his US workforce by 19 per cent within the next year

Helicon shares soar in early trading

First-day dealings in Helicon Publishing Group's shares yesterday saw the price register an 8 per cent premium at one stage, buoyed by Microsoft's 20 per cent stake in the company. The share price, which hit a peak of 135p in mid-morning trading, eased towards the close and settled at 126.5p – a 1.5p gain over the 125p placing price.

Dealers said plenty of investors were trying to buy into the Oxford-based publishing

company yesterday. "Microsoft being a major shareholder gives a big seal of approval. There's been a lot of interest in Helicon, with mainly private client buying," said Stephen Roberts, a trader at Winterflood Securities.

Microsoft acquired a 40 per cent stake in 1996 through a private placing to raise £1.2m for Helicon. Although Microsoft sold none of its shares, its stake was diluted to 20 per cent in the listing, due to Helicon placing 41.2 per cent of new equity on the market.

Helicon has a contract to provide Microsoft with history and current affairs data. It licenses this data to Microsoft, which puts the information on its own computer systems. Helicon's other customers include CompuServe and America Online.

The company publishes a range of titles, including encyclopedias, geography, languages and computing.

Micro Focus shares tumble as chief quits

Cathy Newman

Micro Focus, the computer and software group, yesterday lost its chief executive, Marcelo Gumucio, just 18 months after he joined the company.

The sudden departure sent the shares tumbling 142.5p to £17.82. A source close to Micro Focus said Mr Gumucio's exit reflected the company's disappointingly slow move into information technology services and products.

Mr Gumucio was unavailable for comment last night.

Although Micro Focus "took a step in the right direction" with the purchase of Millennium UK, a year 2000 consulting company, the source said the company's hesitant progress in the IT services sector had been "frustrating".

However, he added: "Marcelo joined Micro Focus at a point when it was losing a great deal of money. The revenues are now on the increase and costs are under control." In the past 15 months the share price has more than doubled.

Micro Focus said he would be replaced by Martin Waters, the former chief executive officer of Platinum Solutions who had been working as a consultant at

Micro Focus. Mr Waters, who has 20 years' management experience in IT groups, will be president and chief executive officer.

The management changes will come as a blow to the company, which had only just begun to recover from a difficult few years. Although Micro Focus shares, which are among the most volatile on the market, are still well below their 1993 high of £30, the stock has recently soared from its all-time low of 58p.

The company said the terms of Mr Gumucio's resignation were still being resolved. However, he was only three months into a year-long contract.

Mr Gumucio earned £231,000 in the year to the end of January, of which £129,000 was paid in performance-related bonuses. He is to resign the 660,500 options he continues to hold in the company.

Mr Gumucio joined in January last year from Memorex-Telco. He arrived at the company less than two weeks after it reported a full-year £6.5m pre-tax loss. Micro Focus said he would continue to work as a consultant and he had returned to his family-owned investment firm, Gumucio, Burke & Associates.

Hercules delay may cost Lockheed £1bn

Michael Harrison

Lockheed Martin, the giant US defence contractor, is close to agreeing a deal to pay compensation to the Ministry of Defence for the late delivery of a £1bn fleet of Hercules transport aircraft.

The group is expected to have to pay liquidated damages of at least £20m (£12m) but it could also end up bearing some of the costs of bringing the fleet of C-130J aircraft into service. The 13-month delay in delivery

could also affect any deal that Lockheed Martin wins to supply the RAF with more Hercules aircraft.

Lockheed had been due to begin delivering the first of the 25 aircraft to the RAF last November but they will not now start to arrive until January next year. The hold up has been caused by delays in getting FAA certification for the new aircraft. This has taken two years rather than the 9 months forecast by Lockheed. Meanwhile, Lockheed said it

was in talks to bring GEC on to its Joint Strike Fighter programme alongside British Aerospace. BAE will be a main risk sharing partner if Lockheed wins the full production order – 3,000 jets worth \$750bn. GEC is supplying flight controls and some avionics for two demonstrator aircraft. The US Defense Department will choose between Lockheed and a rival consortium led by Boeing in 2001.

Lockheed, which is also buying Northrop Grumman, another US defence contractor, is

in talks about the possibility of the French fighter manufacturer, Dassault, and Germany's Deutsche Aerospace joining the JSF programme.

"We want to be a global company, not just one that sells its products overseas, and that means looking for global partners to help us," said Mickey Blackwell, president of Lockheed's aeronautics division.

He said that it was not interested in joining forces with Airbus Industrie until the consortium was privatised.

Ted Baker founder worth £37m after float

Ted Baker, the designer and retailer of fashionable men's clothes, is coming to the stock market in a £56m flotation which will make the company's founder, Ray Kelvin, worth £37m, writes Magnus Grimond.

The windfall comes on top of £3m that Mr Kelvin, chief executive, pulled out of the business as "exceptional directors' emoluments" ahead of the market launch.

The one-off payment has been justified by the company on the grounds that it has no pressing need for a cash pile built up over the past few years. Mr Kelvin is now raising £12m from selling shares in a £26m institutional placing and will see his remaining 45 per cent holding valued at

around £37m at the placing price of 135p a share. The issue is being fully underwritten by Charterhouse Tilney Securities, with first dealings expected next Thursday.

The business was founded by Mr Kelvin in 1988 before being bought out by his joint venture partner, A Goldberg, a Glasgow-based stores group. Mr Kelvin bought it back when Goldberg went under in 1990. Ted Baker's menswear brand competes against the likes of Hugo Boss, with Ted Baker Woman positioned against labels such as Katherine Hammett.

Operating profits before the exceptional emoluments have leapt from £348,000 in 1994-95 to £4.16m last year, on sales up from £4.22m to £14m.

City regulators hand down £285,000 fines

Magnus Grimond

Financial regulators have fined a unit trust group and a City stockbroker a total of £285,000 following regulatory breaches. The fine of £225,000 levied on Sovereign Unit Trust Managers comes on top of £120,000 compensation it has been forced to pay investors in certain of its unit trusts, plus £1.27m it has had to pump into the funds as a result of mispricing and wrongful payment of fees.

The Investment Management Regulatory Organisation took the disciplinary action after Sovereign incorrectly priced eight of its unit trusts as a result of poor internal organisation. More seriously, it charged the fees for

managing three of its trusts, carried out by PDM, to the trusts themselves rather than bearing the costs itself, as the rules require.

Sovereign said there was no suggestion of fraud and investors were "generously" compensated, with an average payment of £35 a head.

Separately, the Securities and Futures Authority has levied a fine and costs of £60,000 on brokers Heather & Greenwood, after it failed to prevent potential conflicts of interest arising in relation to four placings of shares. Two of the deals involved Eric Knebel Ford, a partner, who has been fined £8,000 and agreed to pay costs of £2,000. Both the firm and Mr Ford were reprimanded.

IN BRIEF

US housebuilding starts jump 4.8%

New housebuilding starts in the US jumped 4.8 per cent in June, with the biggest rises in the south, midwest and west. It was the first monthly increase since April, with the annual rate of housebuilding increasing to 1.45 million.

Separate figures from the Labor Department showed a drop in new jobless claims, down to 349,000 last week from 377,000 the previous week. But the department said this was probably due to seasonal shutdowns by the big car manufacturers, a regular event in the first two weeks of July. The less volatile four-week average number of claims edged up to 348,750, the highest since January.

Emap warns shareholders of sterling hit

Emap's French earnings will be hit by the strong pound, chairman Sir John Hoskyns warned shareholders at the company's 50th annual general meeting. He said: "Today, sterling is 30 per cent stronger against the French franc than the average rate over the last financial year. Our financing structures will continue to be an effect on the sterling value of our French earnings."

He added that prospects for trading in the year ahead "remain good. Growth in the UK is strong. France remains slow but is improving. At an operating level the group continues to perform in line with expectations". The UK advertising market was "well ahead" of last year and there were signs of improvement in France, he said. Emap floated in 1947, and the 50th AGM included a presentation and review of the company's first half-century.

Ex-GrandMet director to head Railtrack

Railtrack has appointed Gerald Corbett, previously finance director of Grand Metropolitan, as chief executive. The track operator said Mr Corbett will take up his post on 29 September when John Edmonds, the present chief executive, retires.

Capital gets go-ahead to buy Virgin Radio

The Radio Authority said it "sees no reason" to bar Capital Radio's acquisition of Virgin Radio. The Authority had been conducting a public interest test to determine whether the £64.7m deal would undermine plurality of ownership or diversity of output.

Despite its decision, though, the Authority "sought undertakings" from Capital that news programmes would be separately produced and presented on the three London stations, Capital FM, Capital Gold (AM) and Virgin FM. Virgin's promise of performance has also been amended in the light of the merger to limit alternative rock to 20 per cent of the total output.

Country Casuals settles with ex-chairman

Country Casuals Holdings said the High Court and Industrial Tribunal proceedings brought by John Shannon, the company's former executive chairman, had been settled and all litigation between him and the company was at an end. Country Casuals said the terms of the settlement are confidential to all parties.

Metroline shares priced at 173p

Shares in London bus company Metroline have been priced at 173p, valuing the company at £37.2m. Eight senior managers of Metroline, including chief executive Declan O'Farrell, will be sitting on a paper profit of £12m when the shares start trading on 29 July. The company, which was formed as a result of a £20m management buyout from London Transport in 1994, has forecast it will make pre-tax profits of at least £4m (£3m) on the year to October.

Pre-tax profits at Nightfreight halve

Nightfreight, the contract delivery business, saw its pre-tax profits more than halve in value to £905,000 for the six months to 31 May 1997 compared with the same period last year. Chairman David Cobb said "vigorous action" was being taken to improve the performance of the main parcels division. "We are working strenuously to reduce costs and improve efficiency," he said. Earnings per share fell from 2.61p last time to 1.04p, and the dividend fell from 1.30p to 0.50p.

Company Results				
	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Greenwich Resources (Q) - (Q)	-	-0.07m (2.19m)	0.19 (1.70)	nil
W-Tac Sports (F)	51.1m (52.8m)	3.14m (2.00m)	4.5p (2.5p)	1.2p (nil)
Highlight (Q)	44.1m (38.2m)	0.51m (1.81m)	1.04p (2.81p)	0.5p (1.3p)
Redman Security (F)	102m (93.4m)	3.05m (4.15m)	8.9p (12p)	6.75p (6.75p)
Reverend (F)	3.4m (3.4m)	105m (92.2m)	29.4m (22.3m)	6.8p (-)
Stanley Leisure (F)	407m (318m)	19.4m (14.9m)	11.7p (8.3p)	4.0p (3.25p)
Worthington Group (F)	30.3m (27.1m)	2.86m (2.01m)	6.3p (5.7p)	2.8p (2.5p)

(F) - Final (Q) - Interim (M) - Nine months

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Data Bank	
FTSE 100	4949.0
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SEAQ VOLUME	1.1bn shares
59,381 bargains	
Gifts Index	97.08
Share spotlight	
share price, pence	
100	
150	
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Blue chips take a breather but banks stay on the boil

Taking Stock

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

Blue chips, after a six-day winning run which lifted Footsie more than 200 points, paused for breath, although many of the front-running financials continued to make headway.

National Westminster Bank, up 19.5p to an 893.5p peak, was the centre of attention in late trading. Rumours swirled that a bid, allegedly at 1,070p a share, would be announced today by Prudential Corporation, the insurer.

Many were quick to dismiss the speculation as yet another example of a stock market ramp. Such a deal, they said, would make little, if any sense.

Whether or not the Man from the Pru hovers over NatWest, the strength of the story is yet another indication of the market's absolute conviction that takeover fun and games are about to break out in the high-flying financial sector.

NatWest, with a profit warning and the far reaching problems of its investment arm to tolerate, has surprisingly put on a strong market display, even if the shares have been overshadowed by the likes of Barclays and HSBC.

Paradoxically the NatWest investment side helped to keep bank shares on the boil. It told clients its preferred shares were Barclays, HSBC, Lloyds TSB and Standard Chartered.

NatWest Bank was conspicuous by its absence and, as if to rub salt into the omission, rival securities house Lehman Brothers said NatWest was a sell.

Lehman put a target price of 2,500p on HSBC, which had to live with its own investment arm, the old James Capel, eulogising its merits, claiming it was at least among the best of the banking fraternity.

The songs of praise lifted HSBC to yet another peak, up 26.5p to 2,177.5p. Barclays gained 26p to 1,308.5p and Abbey National 12p to 891.5p.

Insurances produced some strong features with General Accident up 41p to 947.5p and Royal and Sun Alliance 17p to 488.5p. Pru was little changed at 614p.

Schroders, 42.5p harder at 1,837.5p, was another financial in demand but Mercury Asset Management remained neglected, off 3p at 1,269.5p.

Footsie ended 15.2 points lower at 4,949. In early trading it hit 4,993. Trading was again often hectic with turnover topping 1.1 billion,

the second day running the one billion level was breached.

Overseas buyers were still evident, although there appeared to be some relaxation in US interest and a tendency by a few domestic players to snatch profits.

The supporting FTSE 250 index was firm but the FTSE SmallCap again gave ground. British Steel was the star Footsie performer. Its share buyback, orchestrated by Cazzovve, took nearly 5 per cent of the capital out of circulation at 155p a share, leaving the price up 10.25p at 159.75p.

National Grid went to a 262.5p high, up 5p, on HSBC

support and Reed International, up 11.5p to 619p, enjoyed positive comments from Goldman Sachs.

Rolls-Royce continued to fly out of its long dive, climbing 9.5p to 233p. The market sees the abolition of the Government's golden share in BT as a signal it will soon relax the restrictions on foreign ownership of Rolls and British Aerospace shares. Under present regulations foreigners can only hold up to 29.5 per cent of Rolls and BAE, down 3p to 1,337p.

BT, still smarting from the MCI fiasco, fell 5p to 440.5p in more heavy trading. BZW was said to have moved the shares to hold.

Jefferson Smurfit, the packaging and paper group, added 6.5p to 196.5p as the losses by its 46.5 per cent owned US associate heightened the belief that a transatlantic deal was near.

Shield Diagnostic jumped 50p to 570p and Drew Scientific, where there is talk of a rights issue, rose 12p to 117p.

The major drug shares, after recent strength, had a torrid session with Zeneca off 120.5p to 2,144.5p and Glaxo Wellcome 56.5p to 1,343.5p. SmithKline Beecham fell 42.5p to 1,204.5p. SkyPharma declined 12p to 76.5p on drug development delays.

Micro Focus, the computer group, collapsed 142.5p to 1,782.5p on the surprise departure of chief executive Marcel Gumucio.

MFI Furniture gained 6p to 151.5p, largely on the back of the windfall spending spree. Profit forecasts are hardening with £90m top of the range.

Manchester United rose 15p to 685p on hopes of a Far Eastern deal; Martin Edwards, the club's chief executive, sold more shares - 80,000 at 680p.

Lonica, the fledgling telephone group, is due to make its stock market debut with conditional when-issued dealings expected to start this afternoon. An opening price of 400p is likely. The company, with ambitions to become the major competitor to BT, is raising around £125m, selling 23 per cent of its equity. Since launching last year it has attracted 20,000 customers in eastern England and the Midlands and hopes to get into profits by the end of 2,000.

Pfycraft and Arnold, the market's first quoted less adjuster, closed at 57.5p against a 55p placing. Profits should be £1.2m this year.

With £1.5m cash, bolt-on acquisitions are likely. Helicon Publishing, another debutant, traded at 126.5p from a 125p placing. Helicon has a 20 per cent stake.

Share Price Data									
Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 25%. The price is the closing price of the share. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.									
Other details: Ex rights & Ex-dividend & Ex rights & Ex-div									

Tour gets on top of Boardman

The leading British cyclist is nursing more than his injuries: he fears for his future in big stage races like the Tour de France. Robin Nicholl talked to him in St Etienne

Chris Boardman struggled with two agonies as the Tour de France rested here yesterday. Nearly two weeks after he took the leader's yellow jersey for a second year, he hung a big question mark over his Tour future.

It was prompted more by his inconsistent form than his crash on a Pyrenean mountain descent which displaced two vertebrae, and left him in great pain.

"Big tours seem to be beyond me," he said. "I am a good enough single-day rider and for smaller stage races, I am 28 and I have to know what I can do."

"I shall be making a career review after this, but it doesn't have to be as drastic as it sounds. I just have to get people around me to accept what I can do."

Certainly, he wants to escape the pressure that being team leader incurs. "I took on the po-

sition of leader because it was open, but I may be better off as a No 2 or 3. Then I don't feel the pressure."

"The opening time trial is a hell of a lot of pressure. In seven and a half minutes you have to get everything out. That I can handle."

With his team sponsors, GAN, the French insurance group, quitting at the end of the year, Boardman may have to consider offers from other teams unless his current team manager, Roger Legay, finds a new backer.

Among Boardman's problems is one that many riders would love to have. His career highlights since he won Olympic gold in Barcelona include a yellow jersey debut in the Tour in 1994, the world hour record in 1993 and 1996, and world titles in the 4,000 metres track pursuit (1994 and 1996) and the road time trial in 1994.

The next step up is huge. "It is only logical for people to expect more after what I have done," Boardman said.

"After that opening time trial any results would have been a bonus. Luckily Cedric [Vasseur] took up the reins, but it was like salt in my wounds."

Vasseur's valiant solo effort put Boardman's fellow GAN rider in the yellow jersey for four days, and that took the pressure off the Briton. He rode on in agony after his crash. "It was like a poker sticking in me for eight and a half hours. Each day after that I would ride saying: 'I cannot carry on with this.' Yet still I kept turning the pedals."

Boardman has known Tour agony twice. In 1995 Britain expected much, but the twilight in Brittany turned into the twilight of his Tour. He crashed on a wet road in the opening time trial, and next day was down home with fractures to a wrist and ankle.



Each turn of the pedals is agony for Chris Boardman as he receives a water bottle on Wednesday's 11th stage

Photograph: Allsport

to Pamplona. Such hardships made him work harder on being right for 1997.

"I could not have done any more than I did to prepare, and I was even two kilos lighter than the previous year," he said.

"However, I was not happy with my form. It is so inconsistent, and now I am having blood tests to check it out."

"It is going to be a laborious search just to find the reason

why I cannot maintain my form."

Now he is "dead set" on reaching Paris. "It is not in my nature to give up," he said. "I am one and a half hours behind the leader, but I am focusing on the positive."

One aim is success for Frederic Moncassin. GAN's sprinter has missed out in all the sprint finishes so far. "I will be trying hard to get Fred in a good po-

sition for a victory. I feel so sorry for him. He has been frustrated too often."

Meanwhile, Boardman is focused on today's 55km mountain time trial at St Etienne. Before his tumble he would have been a real threat to the Tour leader, Jan Ullrich, but despite pain-killing tablets, acupuncture and physiotherapy, his injury stops him riding his special time-trial bike.

"I cannot ride in that position. In fact I cannot even put my hands in my pockets because of the torn muscles around my neck," Boardman said.

Ullrich is expected to romp home in the time trial, especially as Boardman is injured and some other real threats - Tony Rominger, Alex Zülle and Yevgeny Berzin - are all at home, nursing their broken collarbones.

Redgrave ready for glory

Rowing
HUGH MATHESON

The British team for the World Championships on Lac d'Aiguebelette near Chambéry in Eastern France in September has a fresh-faced, post-Olympic look.

The 35-year-old Steven Redgrave, looking as relaxed and confident as in any of the 18 years he has been in the British team, will race in the coxless four with his partner in gold since 1991, Matthew Pinsent, and James Cracknell and Tim Foster.

Cracknell said: "I have not won a major race since my junior gold in 1990 and in this crew you learn exactly how much you have to do at certain times in the race."

"I am surprised at how fresh I'm feeling sometimes. But then of course winning is much easier than losing. We may not have the highest cruising speed but no one can match our change of pace in a 40 stroke burst." The four made their competitive debut in Munich in May and has won all seven races since.

The coxless pair of Bobby Thatcher and Ben Hunt-Davis has finished second all summer. But the combination has proved a revelation, having been born out of a coxed four. The four was a man short at Munich and the pair raced to make up the programme. Taking second place, they feared this might be a fluke in the unfair conditions, but repeated it in Paris where the conditions were tricky but equal and then did it again at Lucerne to tie on points in the World Cup.

They travel to the championships with genuine hopes of a medal in an event where Britain, in the form of Redgrave, has been on the rostrum for the last 10 years.

Two women's crews of high class have emerged during the season: a coxless pair of Cath Bishop and Dot Blackie, and a double scull of Gillian Lindsay and Miriam Batten. It is to be hoped that each will train on after second places in Paris and fourth places in Lucerne.

THE INDEPENDENT

FREE : Thai food dish up to the value of £8

TREAT YOURSELF TO SOMETHING EXOTIC

KHAO NIEW WAMUANG (Mango with Sticky rice)

Ingredients (Serves 3):

- 250 ml (250ml) Thick coconut milk
- 250g (250g) Sugar
- 1.2 tsp (2.5ml) Salt
- 100g (300g) Sticky rice cooked, still warm (see below)
- 3 Large ripe mangoes
- 2 tbsp (30ml) Coconut cream

Method

- In a bowl, mix the coconut milk, sugar and salt and stir until the sugar has dissolved. Mix in the still warm cooked rice and set aside for 30 minutes.
- Peel the mangoes, and slice the two outside "cheeks" of each fruit as close to the central stone pit as possible. Discard the stone. Slice each piece of fruit into 4 pieces lengthways.
- Mound the rice in the centre of a serving dish and arrange the slices of mango around it. Pour the coconut cream over the rice and serve.

KHAO NIEW (Sticky rice)

Sticky rice is bought by that name and is available in oriental and specialist stores. In Thailand it is often squeezed into a ball with the fingers and then dipped into a sauce.

To cook approx 1 lb (450g) of sticky rice, put the rice in a bowl or pan, cover with cold water and soak for at least 3 hours (or overnight if possible).

Drain and rinse thoroughly. Line the perforated part of a steamer with a double thickness of muslin and turn the rice into it.

Put water in the bottom of the steamer and steam the rice over a medium heat for 30 minutes. Turn the rice into a bowl and serve.

For more recipes and information on participating restaurants, see page 27.

THE INDEPENDENT

THE INDEPENDENT

This voucher entitles the bearer to a free Thai Food Dish from the main menu, up to the value of £8, per table reservation at any one of the participating Thai restaurants as listed in The Independent and Independent on Sunday on 12th and 13th July and The Independent on Friday 18th July. This voucher is valid until 31st August 1997.

Pre-booking is essential.

Please identify yourself as an Independent diner when making the table reservation.

1. This voucher is valid for a free Thai Food Dish from the main menu, up to the value of £8, at any one of the participating Thai restaurants.

2. The Thai Food Dish must be ordered from the main menu, up to the value of £8, at any one of the participating Thai restaurants.

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4. The Thai Food Dish must be ordered from the main menu, up to the value of £8, at any one of the participating Thai restaurants.

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15. The Thai Food Dish must be ordered from the main menu, up to the value of £8, at any one of the participating Thai restaurants.

16. The Thai Food Dish must be ordered from the main menu, up to the value of £8, at any one of the participating Thai restaurants.

17. The Thai Food Dish must be ordered from the main menu, up to the value of £8, at any one of the participating Thai restaurants.

KRUNG TAP RESTAURANT

227-229 Old Brompton Road

London SW5 0EA

0171 259 2314

THAI PEPPER

115 Finchley Road

London NW3 6BY

0171 722 0026

CHAM THAI RESTAURANT

208-210 Bathurst Park Road

London SW11 4ND

0171 622 2269

BUSABONG TREE

112 Chayna Walk

London SW18 0JL

0171 352 7534

SALA THAI RESTAURANT

1066 Chichester Road

London SE16 5AA

01202 426772

CHANG MAI RESTAURANT

18 Fifth Street

London W1

0171 437 7444

SAP THAI RESTAURANT

101 Falmouth Road

London SW2 0BN

0171 351 5682

ON BOY THAI RESTAURANT

245 Garratt Lane

London SW17 0PE

0181 947 9760

STAR OF SIAM

101 Durham Road

London SE16 5AA

0181 947 9760

WATTHAN THAI RESTAURANT

52 Kitchener Road

London SE26 4AB

0181 699 1184

PHARA

9 Beauchamp Place

London SW3 1NQ

0171 581 8820

THAI POT RESTAURANT

1 Bedfordway

London N19 5LB

0171 263 1430

YUM YUM THAI RESTAURANT

5a High Street

London E11 2PY

01509 260030

0171 263 1430

YUM YUM THAI RESTAURANT

5a High Street

London E11 2PY

01509 260030

BURAPA THAI RESTAURANT

69 Westway Hill

London SE19

0181 766 7424

NANA THAI RESTAURANT

The Hamilton Arms

London W2 2NP

01730 812 555

NIPA RESTAURANT

Royal Lancaster Hotel

London W2 2NP

0171 262 6731

MARISA THAI RESTAURANT

218 Old Chichester Road

London SE16 5AA

01202 558 125

YUM YUM THAI RESTAURANT

30 Stoken Newington

London SE16 5AA

0171 254 6751

YU THAI RESTAURANT

19 Exhibition Road

London SW7 2HE

0171 584 8359

MATHUROSE THAI RESTAURANT

52 Kitchener Road

London SE26 4AB

0181 699 1184

PHARA

9 Beauchamp Place

London SW3 1NQ

0171 581 8820

THAI POT RESTAURANT

1 Bedfordway

London N19 5LB

0171 263 1430

YUM YUM THAI RESTAURANT

5a High Street

London E11 2PY

01509 260030

BURAPA THAI RESTAURANT

69 Westway Hill

London SE19

0181 766 7424

NANA THAI RESTAURANT

The Hamilton Arms

London W2 2NP

0171 379 4580

THAI THAM

78 Gloucester Road

London SW16 7AB

0181 769 7529

PU'S BRASSERIE

10 Gate Street

London W2A 3HP

0171 404 2132

THE COCK & DRAGON

Chalk Lane

London W2A 3HP

0181 449 7160

CHANG RAI THAI RESTAURANT

16 Princess Street

Manchester M1 4NB

0161 237 5511

CHANG RAI THAI RESTAURANT

762-766 Wilmot Road

London W13 9AU

0181 567 9474

THE CRAB & DRAGON

220 Finchley Road

London NW2 2JQ

01276 22578

THE NORBITON & DRAGON

16 Clifton Road

London W1P 5RD

0171 631 6289

ROYAL ORCHARD THAI RESTAURANT

36 Charlotte Street

Manchester M1 4FD

0161 236 5183

THAI PRIVILEGE

42 Rupert Street

London W1

0171 287 6333

SIAM ORCHID THAI RESTAURANT

54 Portland Street

Manchester M1 4QU

0161 236 1388

0171 379 4580

THAI THAM

78 Gloucester Road

London SW16 7AB

0181 769 7529

PU'S BRASSERIE

10 Gate Street

London W2A 3HP

0171 404 2132

THE COCK & DRAGON

Chalk Lane

0171 379 4580

sport

THE 126th OPEN

Woods began to show why even some of the greatest players are in awe of his potential

Welcome Tiger Woods, welcome to Troon's trickery, its bounces, its temptations. One under at the turn but eight fairways missed and a capricious breeze getting up. Here and there a grimace, gestures of annoyance.

At odds with himself, unhappy with his game the tournament favourite was scrambling. The grass cuttings Woods used to test the wind told him little other than it was day for accuracy rather than distance. Keep the damn thing straight you could imagine him thinking.

Woods almost announced his presence in the championship by driving the 364-yard first. Instead the ball kicked left into a greenside bunker. "No justice," someone in the gallery said. "Away to go," a small boy called out but there was no answering smile. Things were already getting difficult.

Being the focus attention is something Woods has to live with. "I'd love his golf game," an old tournament pro recently said, "but not the pressures that come with it."

Woods' playing partners provided an interesting comparison. Steve Elkington

with his elegant swing, Bernhard Langer's studied efficiency. Not men to be intimidated by power. Men with smart games and a great deal of experience they chose not to gamble, usually taking an iron off the tee no matter what Woods was up to.

He found rough again at the second and at the next landed on a billtop. At the fourth Woods gave the gallery what they wanted unleashing a huge drive that skipped on to 422 yards, easily a hundred past Elkington and Langer. Just 135 to the pin, missed eagle putt; birdie.

So where now? How about bare ground alongside a stand overlooking the par three fifth which is where Woods landed. A fluffy pitch to save par and a birdie at the par-five sixth. Fairways did not appear to be on Woods' agenda but he was two under and his escapes were becoming reminiscent of a young Severiano Ballesteros.

Another misread green, another birdie chance gone and then acquaintance with the Postage Stamp's seductive contours. Moving along serenely Langer also was at two under



KEN JONES

and another birdie came his way. Woods, however, got it wrong, losing a seven iron enough in the breeze to find a greenside bunker. A decent enough shot from the sand but well past the pin to be left with a tricky downhill putt. Misreading it again he took two and was back to one under.

This didn't please Woods at all. He swung his putter angrily, tossed it at the bag and offended the game's etiquette by leaving the green before Elkington holed out for a double-bogey. A par for Woods at the ninth and they

were out in the far country, held up on the next tee by the group in front. The trick was working out just where in the rough Woods would put his next tee shot. To the right this time followed by a splendid second. Two putts, another save.

While they waited on the 11th tee a train approached slowly. Identifying Woods, the engineer gave a blast on the whistle. Woods smiled but the moment did not appear to relax him greatly. A blind shot over dunes ended up in a gorse bush. "Come on, Tiger," his young supporters shouted as they watched him stride towards another problem. One simply began another. Taking a penalty out of a gorse bush he was too ambitious, moving the ball only 80 yards forward and still not on the fairway. "I got frustrated out there," he said afterwards, "but I never lost my patience and I'm proud of that."

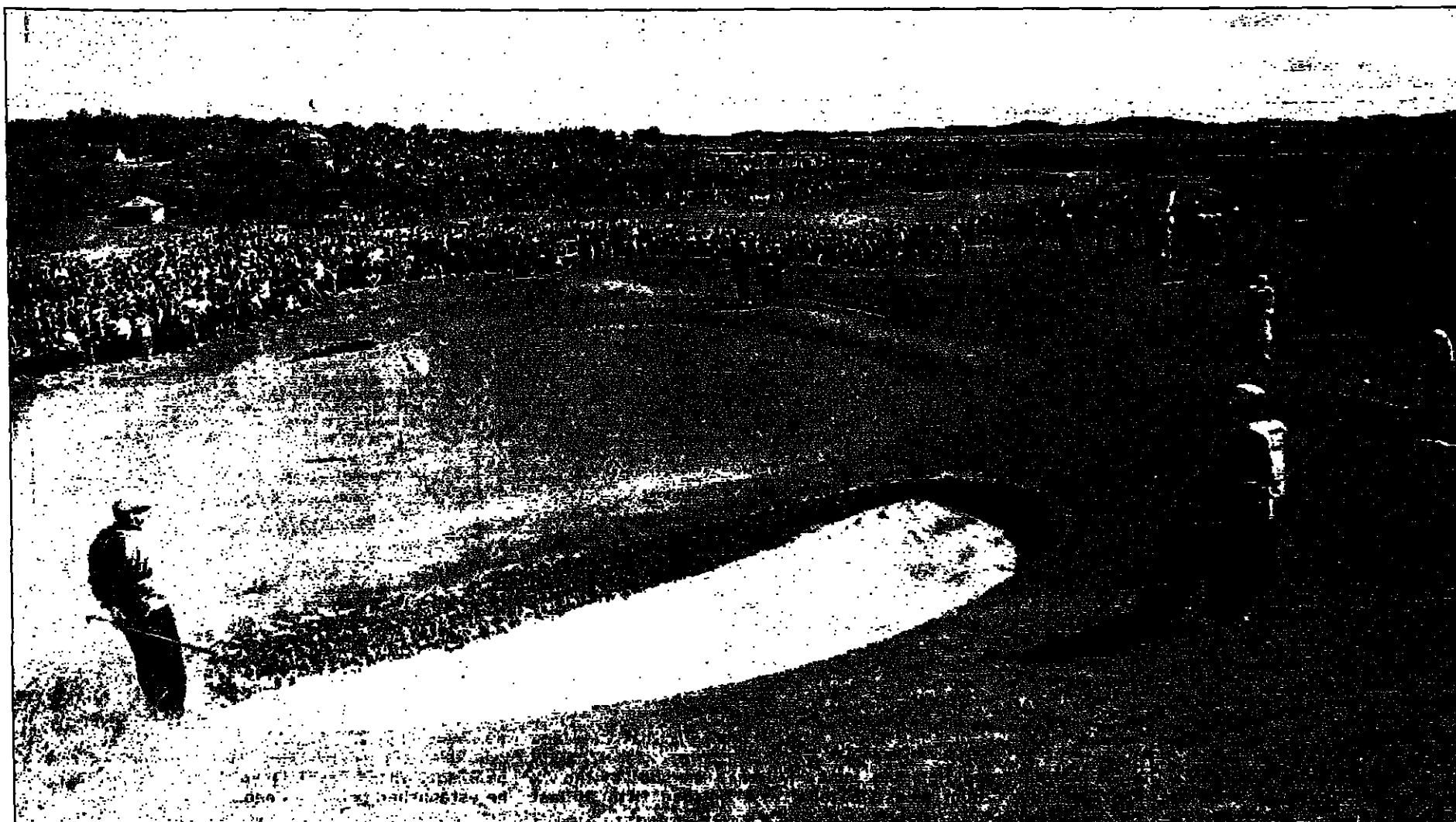
For a while frustration looked like being the source of a crisis. Woods' fourth shot at the 11th went to the back of the green and a rare triple-bogey seven went on his card. From there Woods began to show

why even some of the greatest players golf has ever known are in awe of his potential. Not just his remarkable power, but his shot-making and the courage to hold a round together.

Making more than one birdie on the back nine at Troon is a difficult enough task at the best times but when a breeze gets up on the Forth of Clyde some smart play is called for. Few managed it yesterday, but Woods was up to the task. A birdie at 17 another at the last.

Accepting that he'd benefited eventually from a touch of good fortune, he said, "I'd like the wind to remain a big factor. If it's real tough like this it makes it easier to make up ground. You can shoot 66 and make up position. But if things are calm you can shoot 66 and remain in the same position. I got a good bounce at the last and I'm still in the ball game. I was disappointed not to birdie one of the first three holes and I hardly read a green right. But I'm still in the ball game."

If Woods starts hitting fairways today it could be altogether a different ball game.



Tom Watson (right), the former Open champion, chips on to the green at the hazardous eighth hole at Royal Troon yesterday

Photographs: David Ashdown

Licked by the Postage Stamp

When Willie Park, the first winner of the Open Championship, took a look at Royal Troon's eighth hole he was agast. It has "a pitching surface," he said, "skimming down to the size of a postage stamp." The name stuck, although it is unlikely whether Mark Calcavecchia delivered his abuse yesterday in such charming and eloquent terms.

The last time the American played this course he would have gladly taken it back to Florida with him. He may still want the bulk of it as a reminder of the three closing 68s that landed him the Open in 1989, but there are 126 yards of it that he would gladly leave behind.

Yes, just 126 yards. Tiger Woods could flick the ball that distance with the back of his putter on the practice ground, but if ever a hole proved that it is not size that matters it is the Postage Stamp. Shrink the green, surround it with sand

traps and put a bank of nature's rubbish on the left and suddenly even the Tiger, who bogeyed the hole yesterday, is rubbing his eyes.

In the Twenties Walter Hagen took a double-bogey five there in the final round and lost an Open Championship by a stroke. Three decades later a German by the name of Herman Tiesis got in a tizzy so profound he entered the record books. More of him later.

Yesterday Calcavecchia arrived at the Postage Stamp in about as good a mood as he could get. The fifth, sixth and seventh had yielded birdies, the sun was taking the edge off the chilling wind and the young boys on the scoreboard behind the eighth tee were busy shooting up ladders adding him to the leaderboard.

Golf has a habit of introducing glowering clouds to an otherwise perfect morning, however, and although Cal-

Guy Hodgson watches as the notorious eighth hole claims another set of victims

avecchia was only a fraction out with his tee-shot, maybe a degree to the left, it was enough to send his ball arcing into a bunker so maliciously shaped the Marquis de Sade would be storming straight into the greens committee if one of his victims strayed there.

Calcavecchia would be waiting behind him ready to bang the table, because his ball landed so close to the bunker's rim that the next shot was almost impossible. Or at least it was while standing up. Down to his knees the erstwhile champion sank, seemingly in prayer, before miraculously chipping the ball out over the Penny Black of a putting surface. On and on it ran before sinking into another bunker.

Fine. You take your punishment and go. Calcavecchia

chipped to four feet and was contemplating a scruffy but acceptable bogey four until he pulled his putter. Exot one disgruntled golfer, his upward momentum checked so thoroughly he finished with a three-over-par 74.

If he was cursing, the sound was drowned: the eighth at Troon is not only the shortest hole in Open golf but possibly the noisiest. Pilots taking off from Prestwick Airport seem to use the flag as a bearing, and as if that is not enough of a distraction the hole also has the Glasgow-Ayr railway line running alongside it. That had some of us wondering what the pre-electric age was like - until Colin Montgomerie kindly arrived to provide an illustration.

Big Monty made a right hand of his tee-shot, took his second

bogey in two holes and hissed off into the distance having banked up enough steam to peel the Postage Stamp and an album of first-day issues off their envelopes. The Flying Scotsman could not have gone by billowing more smoke.

Which made you also speculate what sort of mood Herman the German was in after being licked by the Postage Stamp in 1950. Tiesis found a bunker on the left with his tee-shot and was still making his acquaintance with the sand four shots later when his fifth finally got him out of the snare and into another sand trap on the other side of the green.

Again he needed more than one shot to escape, found a hillock as anger added over-enthusiasm to his efforts and two strokes later was back in the bunker where he began. His final tally at the hole was 15, a score that even Ian Baker-Finch managed to avoid yesterday.

Give or take the odd five the Postage Stamp let the field off lightly yesterday, although 49 players managed to drop shots there. No one could manage a hole in one, which added lustre to Gene Sarazen's achievement 24 years ago.

The great American failed to qualify when the Open was held at Troon in 1923 and there were many who believed he should have stood aside for a younger man when he accepted an invitation to return to the course at the age of 71 in 1973.

He rammied those thoughts where they came from by holing the eighth in one in the first round. "For many years the Postage Stamp had haunted me," Sarazen said afterwards. "I feared it... I felt there could be no better way to close the books on my tournament play."

The Postage Stamp closed no careers yesterday. It tempted one or two though.

Taunted by Troon: two who suffered in the first round

As a member of Royal Troon, Colin Montgomerie is well aware of the old tradition of setting off early in the morning, playing the front nine, crossing over to the adjoining Prestwick course to complete 18 holes, lunching in the renowned clubhouse there, and then setting out on the return journey. Monty might have contemplated doing much the same yesterday, except replacing the last by continuing a routemarch along the coast.

A first-round 76, five over par, once more sees the Scot battling to avoid the cut in the Open, something he has failed to do on four of the last five occasions. "This is nothing new to me," Europe's four-times No 1 conceded. "Whether I do well tomorrow or not, I'll come back from this. It won't hurt."

Montgomerie needs to reverse his opening rounds of 65-76 from the US Open. "I'm capable of doing that," he said. "I just played particularly badly today."

In his wife's home town and at the club where his father retires as secretary in a month's time, Monty was welcomed on to the first tee with another

Andy Farrell on the faltering progress of the local favourite

Scottish favourite, Tom Watson. Immediately, Montgomerie pushed his tee shot, was over the green with his second and had to hole a five-footer for par.

Montgomerie's form coming into the tournament was unquestionable, capped by a 62 in the Irish Open. But more than his local knowledge, it was his noted straight driving that should have made him a contender on a course with fairways of single carriage width. But Monty hit only three out of 14 fairways. At times he took iron off the tee for positional purposes and still missed the short grass. Meanwhile, Watson smoozed his driver to such an effect that the difference between their tee shots was over 100 yards.

At the sixth, a jumbo making a low, slow, graceful take-off from Prestwick airport took one look at Monty and made a dogleg left, heading out over the Atlantic. The captain was not a bad judge. Having birdied the



Montgomerie: Only found three out of 14 fairways

two par-fives on the front nine, Monty went on a shocking run of seven bogeys in nine holes. Mostly these were caused by being on the right rough off the tee, his familiar push under pressure, but occasionally it was because he was in the left rough off the tee.

At the end, he stomped off to the clubhouse, but whereas in the past that would have been the last anyone would have seen of him, he lived up to a promise to explain himself after a short cooling-off period. He even managed to force a smile when someone said he must have been pleased to par the last three holes.

Ian Baker-Finch probably felt he had made the right decision when he played Royal Troon's first year in a regulation four. Seventeen horrible Open Championship holes later he was proved sadly wrong.

The 1991 champion, a player once so good he has set Open records of 29 shots for nine holes at St Andrews and Royal Birkdale, was buried under the wreckage of a 21-over-par first round so embarrassing he withdrew from the tournament immediately after completing it.

"The hardest thing is being an Open champion and wanting to do well," he said. "I don't want to give in but I don't think I should play tomorrow. The decision has been made."

Royal Troon was not at its most benign yesterday but Baker-Finch gave the impression he could not have found a fairway on an airless day with the aid of an electronic guidance system. He went out in 44, eight over par, which proved to be his halcyon period because the back nine was even worse.

Three successive bogeys had the 36-year-old Australian reduced to laughing at himself after he had to hack the ball out

Guy Hodgson on the Australian who quit after shooting a nightmare 92

from thick gorse on the 12th, the Forc. His inclination must have been to cry when that was followed by a double at the 15th and a treble at the par-five 16th, where he drove out of bounds.

He dragged himself off the course with a score of 92 - the worst Open round since Guy McQuitty returned a 95 at Turnberry 11 years ago - his brave decision to ignore his wretched form rendered utterly foolhardy. "You don't have an option but to complete the round," he said. "You can't say to yourself 'Oh well, I'll walk in now' or something like that. You have to keep on going and just try your hardest. That's all I could do."

Last year he played in the Open at Royal Lytham then went into semi-retirement before he was persuaded by older memories and older friends to give it a go this week.

"I don't regret the decision," he said. "I played nicely in the practice rounds. It wasn't too



Baker-Finch: The former champion shot a 92

much trouble. I thought I should go and do it."

Which was fine until the sixth where he found a bunker, fluffed a chip and got one of six double bogeys. "When you start bogeying or worse," he said, "you begin to wonder what everyone is thinking. You start noticing the cameramen, all that stuff. It's hard to focus on the job when you're shooting horrendous like that."

"I gradually got worse. Earlier in the round I wasn't really playing that poorly, maybe a bad chip, one or two bad drives. Everything just went wrong. That can happen."

Unfortunately for Baker-Finch it is happening far too often.

Troon Talk

BY JAMES CUSICK

Lasses are a class apart

Is golf still dominated by class? In a play on words to mark Tiger Woods' arrival at Royal Troon the American sports community (in cursive) may question such claims of egalitarianism. All members of Troon are male, the ladies having their own separate clubhouse: a quarter of a mile away, the Portland course, and their own constitution. Royal Troon owns the ladies' club. Valentine accepted: "There is nothing in our constitution to prevent a woman becoming a member, but so far in our history no lady has been proposed. But then I should point out there is nothing in the ladies' constitution that prevents a male from applying there."

Plenty of room for Nike's copywriters to work on there. Yes, there are doctors and

lawyers and the odd Sir and professor, but Mr Valentine and other prominent members insisted that elitist would be an inappropriate term here.

Only the feminist movement (in cursive) may question such claims of egalitarianism. All members of Troon are male, the ladies having their own separate clubhouse: a quarter of a mile away, the Portland course, and their own constitution. Royal Troon owns the ladies' club. Valentine accepted: "There is nothing in our constitution to prevent a woman becoming a member, but so far in our history no lady has been proposed. But then I should point out there is nothing in the ladies' constitution that prevents a male from applying there."

Reserve Robertson made to sweat

On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday he practised at Troon without being certain that he would get a place on the competition tee.

Michael Bonallack, the secretary of the Royal and Ancient, had quietly told him the position of first reserve usually always made it. But even by Wednesday morning Dean Robertson, the 27-year-old Scots professional, was still sweating. There had been hints that Ian Baker-Finch would save himself from embarrassment and withdraw but he did not. And yesterday confirmed he should have (he shot 92). Instead a Japan-

ese competitor went home early and Robertson was in. The whole Robertson family drove down from their home in Paisley yesterday morning. Dean is staying with his parents this week. "Makes it a cheap week for him," said his brother, another golfer whose own battles at Troon are playing in the annual match against Glasgow University and the experience will doubtless have been passed on. Robertson shot a respectable 76 playing alongside Mark Calcavecchia and Andrew Coltart. "He played well," said his brother, "and he'll shoot par tomorrow." Nothing like a bit of family support.



Ahead of fashion: One spectator provides some light relief for the players on the first day of the Open

TODAY'S TEE-OFF TIMES

Second round	
0735 W. Bledsoe, A. O'Grady, P. Haugland (Nor)	1235 P. Blackmer (US), J. Sparrow, S. McCorran (US)
0735 S. Young, G. Orr, D. Russell	1235 N. Sato (Japan), P. McAnley, B. Watts (US)
0735 D. Han (US), I. Garmis (Sri), M. Bradley (US)	1235 R. Gossens (SA), S. Torrance, P. Sawchuk (US)
0745 C. Strong (US), J. Lomas, E. Bie (SA)	1235 P. Leonard (Aus), C. Watson, J. Macgarry (US)
0745 D. Edgar (Swe), J. Fyfe (US), Y. Kaneko (Japan)	1235 S. Westwood, S. Snodgrass (US), G. Horner (Aus)
0805 D. Clarke, S. Jones (US), F. Holob (NZ)	1245 P. J. Johansson (Swe), S. Man (Japan), J. Nicklaus (US)
0815 M. James, M. Webb (US), C. Peden (US)	1255 C. Montgomerie, T. Watson (US), M. McNulty (Ire)
0825 C. Frazee (US), L. Janssen (US), M. Long (NZ)	1305 R. Russell, F. Couples (US), E. Runtz (Aus)
0835 B. Fason (US), J. Parnell (Swe), R. Green (Aus)	1315 A. Conner, M. Calcavecchia (US), T. Watson (Japan)
0845 T. Woods (US), B. Langer (Ger), S. Elkington (Aus)	1325 I. Watson, R. Allardyce (Aus), P. Sawchuk (US)
0855 P. Harrington, M. Brooks (US), C. Poirier (Aus)	1335 M. O'Meara (US), S. Manayama (Japan), S. Lyle
0905 M. A. Martin (Sri), T. Lehman (US), V. Singh (Ind)	1345 T. Barnum (US), J. Cook (US), S. Ames (SA)
0915 P. Mitchell, C. Stadler (US), D. Frost (SA)	1355 J. H. Duggan (Sri), T. Mole (US), N. O'Hara (Japan)
0925 P. Adair (US), D. O'Sullivan (Swe), G. Piger (SA)	1405 P. Broadhurst, J. Leonard (US), W. R. Jay (Aus)
0935 N. Faldo, T. Toles (US), N. Price (Zim)	1415 J. Van de Velde (Frl), L. Roberts (US), P. Senner (Aus)
0945 M. A. Jimenez (Sri), D. Duval (US), G. Turner (NZ)	1425 D. Love (US), S. Ballesteros (Sri), H. Miyazaki (Japan)
0955 P. Hedblom (Swe), J. Haas (US), K. J. Young (Aus)	1435 I. Baker-Finch (Aus), R. Day (US), B. Tweed (US)
1005 P. O'Malley (Aus), B. Howard, J. Payne (US)	1445 R. McParlane, B. Andros (US), M. Rose (US)
1015 G. Brand, Jr., G. Day (US), C. Mason	1455 A. Magno (US), P. Curry, J. Coover (NZ)
1045 P. Fyfe (Swe), J. Kelly, "J" Miller	1505 K. Duke (US), S. Bottomley, "Y" Taylor (US)
1055 M. Bradley, P. Vanaman (US), S. Dunwo (US)	1515 M. Miller, G. Murray, M. Marner (Sri)
1105 L. Batcher, K. Skiffon (Swe), C. Clark	1525 A. Sandywell, G. Clark, B. McGovern
1125 R. Jacquelin (Frl), G. Dodd (Aus), J. Stearns (North)	1535 J. Remley (Frl), V. Phillips, D. Tappin
1135 "C" Webster, A. Cabrera (Arg), D. Howell	1545 R. Harrison (Swe), T. Goggin (Ger), C. Perry (US)
1145 T. Purzer (US), R. Bonal, W. Westerman (SA)	1545 J. Kerchman (US), G. Ghol (Ind), P. Hinton

THE NUMBERS GAME

- 7 The bogeys that Colin Montgomerie had in his round of 76
- 40 The age Nick Faldo is today
- 11 The years since anyone had a worst round in the Open than Ian Baker-Finch's 92
- 5 The times America's Tom Watson has won the Open Championship
- 2 The bunkers Tiger Woods visited on the par-four first hole
- 9 The shots that England's Mark Roe needed to get down at the par 4 Railway

TV TIMES

Live coverage: 10.30am-12.20pm and 1pm-7.30 BBC2
Highlights: 9pm-9.40 BBC2

WEATHER FORECAST

Cloudy with sunny periods. Winds will strengthen from the north west, 10-15mph during afternoon. Max temp 19C.

